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REMEDIAL CLASSES AND THE TOTAL ENGLISH PROGRAM

by George Hillocks, Jr.

I once had a ninth grade student who couldn't read much above a third grade level. One day, as I gave him an oral reading check, he read the word tomatoes on one line, but blocked completely on isn't in the next. At the time, about all I knew to do was to give him special word attack exercises and to adjust his reading material if I could find material which was easy enough and at the same time interesting enough for a physically mature male who spent his nights in a local pool hall and his days watching the physically mature ninth grade girls. But the boy was in an average ninth grade class, and I had neither the technical skill nor the materials to help him. The next year the young man entered the tenth grade and began the study of Julius Caesar.

The point is not that the young man had learned to read well enough to begin reading Shakespeare. The point is that the tenth grade teacher had failed to recognize the reading problem. And the recognition of the reading problem is at least a start. Why should a boy be confronted with Elizabethan English when he can't read modern English? Why should he be in an English class at all when the teacher has neither the facilities nor the skill to help him?

It is the philosophy at Euclid Central that such students should be placed in a special reading class. If a student cannot read within at least two years of his grade level and test scores indicate that he should read within two years of his grade, he is placed in a special class for which he receives English credit. The function of the special class--the remedial reading class--is to improve the student's reading level to a point where he can operate in an average English class. Reading, whether it be of application forms or highly symbolic modern poems, is one of the most important skills that we as English teachers teach, and perhaps the most important skill to a student's success in school. If a student cannot read he will have difficulty in every school subject from mathematics to physical education, where students must, in some schools at least, read rule books and first aid texts. For this reason it seems completely justifiable to place a student in a special class where he will receive English credit and where the teacher can devote his full class time to diagnosing and treating the reading ailments of individual students.

The same is true of the remedial composition class, but to a lesser extent. Here the student can read, but experiences grave difficulties in composing. The student in such a class reads the materials in the average curriculum, but spends a great deal of class time in learning to write. The first steps taken by the teacher are simply to encourage the students to write more. Once the student feels free to put pen to paper and write, the teacher can begin to teach such things as style, spelling, punctuation and so forth.

The teacher of any English class can make few or no assumptions about what the skills of his students should be. He must find out what they are and move gradually in the direction of what they should be. This is especially true for the teacher of a remedial class. He must make every effort to discover what his students can and cannot do. Only then can he begin to help his students conquer one problem at a time. And when the student is no longer frustrated with reading or writing problems, he can take his place in an average class, where another teacher can continue the student's development.

DEFINITION, ORIGIN, AND TREATMENT OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT

by Jane W. Kessler

Underachievement is a special national concern of the moment. In contemporary American culture, education is regarded as the magic key to success. The dawn of the Space Age brought education and higher intellectual achievement to the forefront of national attention. Educators, parents, and, finally, children have felt the heat of educational acceleration. It has become clear that not only is the supply of nuclear physicists inadequate, but also the demand for unskilled laborers is fast dwindling. For practical reasons, parents and teachers are alarmed when a child shows difficulty in academic learning. When a child fails in school, or consistently falls far short of his intellectual potential, the problem is almost a matter of dollars and cents. The parents worry: "Will he go far enough in school to be able to get a good job?" From a broader perspective, the educator asks such questions as: "Will he be a school dropout and potential delinquent?" "Is valuable talent going to waste--talent which could preserve our way of life?"

School learning difficulties have long been a frequent reason for referral of school-age children to child guidance clinics. Gilbert's survey of referral problems reveals that academic difficulties are the most common single reason, representing 45 percent of the total. There are no statistical reports sufficiently recent or complete to reflect the societal changes of the past decade. Including the referrals to psychological services within the public schools as well as referrals to child guidance and child psychiatry clinics under hospital or community auspices, it is probable that academic difficulty is given as the presenting problem for three fourths of the children who are first referred in the age bracket between eight and fourteen years. A small example of present-day attitudes is given by the following anecdote. A nine-year-old boy was referred for psychiatric diagnosis because he daydreamed and pulled out big bunches of his hair in class. In making the referral, both teacher and parent pointed out that he was doing very well in his academic studies, "but if the daydreaming and hair-pulling keep up, perhaps his schoolwork will be affected." Apparently the only reason for concern was the possible damage to his grade average.

As an educational phenomenon, a learning difficulty is an inadequacy in scholastic achievement, measured by an academic norm currently in vogue. Changing the academic standards may alter the report card without making any basic change in the individual. As an emotional symptom, a learning difficulty is a sign of functional impairment. In a learning difficulty of emotional origin, there is a restriction of some ego function: a difficulty in absorbing new knowledge (learning in its literal meaning); a difficulty in holding knowledge (memory); a difficulty in synthesis of knowledge (judgment and comprehension); or a difficulty in giving out (producing work). Of course, these ego restrictions are not mutually exclusive and may appear in various combinations. However, to assert that an academic difficulty is emotional, it must be established that one or another of these ego restrictions is operative. A child may be failing in school because of poor health or sensory deficit, because of poor teaching, or because of scholastic expectations which are unrealistic for his particular level of mental ability.

More articles have appeared on the subject of learning disturbances than on any other form of childhood psychopathology, with the possible exception of juvenile delinquency. Only recently have authors attempted to define their terms. Many times, the term "learning disorder" is applied to a total inhibition of intellectual functioning, that is, a depression of intelligence from emotional causes, as in psychogenic retardation. At other times, it is used synonymously with "underachievement," that is a discrepancy between school performance and measurable intelligence. And within the general category of underachievement there are learning difficulties which are concomitant with such other gross symptoms as delinquency, seizures, childhood schizophrenia, and severe obsessional states. Any personality disorder which has a pervasive effect on the ego or superego is likely to have school difficulties as one inevitable consequence. This is a different picture from that of primary neurotic learning inhibition where the learning difficulty is the major symptom.

It seems deceptively easy to define underachievement until we look closely at the three components involved: (1) the measurement of potentiality; (2) the measurement of achievement; and (3) the degree of discrepancy to be considered significant. There is no need to belabor the difficulties which are involved in the measurement of intelligence or potentiality. This would lead into problems of choice of tests, constancy of the IQ, and the nature versus nurture controversy regarding the development of intelligence. This is a field in and of itself. In identifying underachievement one can say that a "false positive" is highly unlikely although it is possible to get a "false negative." In other words, if there is a significant discrepancy in measured intelligence and achievement, it is worthy of serious consideration. On the other hand, if there is no such significant discrepancy, it is conceivable, though not certain, that the measured intelligence and measured achievement are both affected by the same factors to a like degree, thereby masking a learning disorder of emotional or environmental origin.

Turning to the second component of achievement measures, we find two main ways of measuring achievement in school children: scores on standardized achievement tests and teachers' grades or reports. It is important to recognize that a group of students picked as underachievers on the basis of school grades will not be the same as those picked as underachievers on the basis of achievement test scores.[2] The children who are identified as underachievers on the basis of below-expectancy achievement test scores have failed to learn academic skills or acquire information. This group includes cases of specific disabilities, such as reading problems and the like. In all these cases there has been a failure in learning, partial or total, relative to the rate of learning expected from the measured intelligence. In contrast, those children who score well on achievement tests and do poorly on grades demonstrate that they have been learning what they should. The low grades may indicate an inability or unwillingness to produce the required work, an inability or unwillingness to cooperate with the teacher, an inferiority in performance relative to the rest of his classmates, and so on. On the face of it, it seems that the psychological cause-and-effect for the nonlearning group is more serious than for the nonproducing group. The latter are in possession of the requisite skills and information to use when there is a change in their motivation or

situational circumstances. The nonlearners become increasingly handicapped as time goes by; a problem which may have started from purely psychological causes, in time becomes a realistic problem which cannot be overcome by purely psychological means alone. It is not enough to say that underachievers chosen by these two criteria are different; careful longitudinal research is needed to demonstrate if the prognosis is in reality more favorable for the one than for the other, as one would think on a common-sense basis.

Finally, we should consider the problem of the degree of discrepancy between measures of intelligence and achievement. Most people do not do as much or as well as they could. It is very hard to decide at what exact point this falling short ceases to be merely human and becomes an individual problem. Just from inspection one can appreciate that a ten-year-old youngster of average ability who performs like a second grader in reading, writing, and arithmetic has a serious problem. But suppose this same youngster performs like an average fourth grader? Then the decision whether to classify him as an underachiever is much more difficult and arbitrary. The statistical problems inherent in the definition of underachievement are more important in the research setting than in the clinical setting, where one is likely to see the obvious, extreme cases. Estimates as to the number of underachievers in a school-age population will vary in direct relationship to the definition that has been applied. One reads statements to the effect that 50 percent of children of superior mental ability are underachievers, which naturally arouses a feeling of alarm. Such estimates are based on a rigid, stringent criterion of matching achievement and intelligence. One can control the number of underachievers by the manipulation of test scores. This does not mean that all of these children are psychologically "in a bad way" and destined to be dismal failures.

It is difficult to review the extensive research that has been reported on underachievers because there has been no commonly accepted definition. The following highlights are only some specific points which the author has picked out of the confusing welter of published material:

1. Underachievement can occur at any mental ability level.

2. Underachievement is predominantly a male problem. No matter where the studies have been done, or what method has been used, there is universal agreement that a greater number of boys than girls are underachievers. Also, the timing is different. Chronic male underachievers tend to display underachieving behavior in the earliest grades, while females, in general, begin to demonstrate serious underachieving behavior in their late elemeatary or junior high school grades.[3]

3. There has been a steady trend toward looking at younger and younger age groups for the beginning of underachievement. Shaw and Brown,[4] among others, report that the problems of the college underachiever with superior ability do not originate in the college environment. Most of these students had a record of underachievement dating back to high school. Frankel[5] reports that underachievement among intelligent high school boys can be predicted from their junior high records. In a similar vein, Shaw

and Brown,[4] among others, report that the problems of the college underachiever with superior ability do not originate in the college environment. Most of these students had a record of underachievement dating back to high school. Frankel[5] reports that underachievement among intelligent high school boys can be predicted from their junior high records. In a similar vein, Shaw and Grubb[6] conclude that underachievement does not have its origin in the high school classroom but that it is a problem which the student brings with him, at least in embryo, from junior high school. Barrett[7] was able to trace the first appearance of underachievement in his group of gifted secondary school students back to the fifth grade. Krugman and Impellizzeri[8] identify grade three as the crucial point when reading and other school difficulties first become apparent. Shaw and McCuen[9] established an even earlier age of onset for a group of underachieving boys in the eleventh grade. Even in grade one these boys had lower grades than the later achievers. However, it was not until grade three that this difference became statistically significant.

All authors emphasize the need for early identification for remedial measures to be successful. Everyone who is studying underachievement finds that the causes predate the particular age period with which they are directly concerned. Everyone thinks that treatment would be more effective if only it were started earlier. It is easy to sympathize with the pleas for early detection. Nevertheless, it is still a question at what age and by what means the chronic learning problem can be recognized. Retrospective studies tell us that underachievers show early signs of trouble, but we need to know how many children who show those same signs at the same early point do not become underachievers at a later age. Longitudinal research is needed to show which kinds of underachievement lead to what final results, not only in school, but also in vocational and community living after school. Without some scientific care and caution, there is danger of getting caught up in a whirlpool of excitement and perfectionism where every other child is regarded as an underachiever in dire need of special help.

4. A fourth area of research has been the description of differentiating characteristics of the underachievers. As might be expected, the parents of underachievers tend to have less education than do the parents of the achievers. The parents of the achievers also show a greater inclination to push their children toward achievement, not only at school, but in other areas as well. The parents of underachievers not only appear to demand less in the way of specific performance from their children, but also to make their demands at a later date. Kramer[10] shows that there was more expressed difference of opinion as to how to raise children between the parents of an underachiever than between the parents of the achievers. So far as the children themselves are concerned, there has been conflicting evidence as to whether they are less or more anxious, more or less negative in their self-concept, and so on. Some interesting studies at the college level have indicated that achievers are more realistic in setting goals for themselves. Mitchell,[11] for instance, finds that underachievement is associated with a high level of aspiration and a gross overestimation of actual performance. Worell[12] finds that the high achiever characteristically sets a level of aspiration which is close to his previous performance and does not expect to achieve considerably beyond his previous efforts by exerting himself to the limits of his capacity.

The list of studies of this order is almost endless, but the results are often inconclusive or offer little beyond a superficial personality observation. Partly, this is because of methodological problems of definition and measurement. But in addition; contradictory findings are inherent in the very nature of the problem studied. It is naive to expect that underachievement results from any single cause. Underachievers do not form a homogeneous group any more than, say, a group of traffic offenders. It is important to consider underachievement as a problem with many causes. We should look for ways to subdivide the group according to degree and kind of symptom as well as etiology.

I turn now to comments which are based on clinical observations of individual children rather than on large-scale research investigations. Most of this experience has been derived from diagnostic and counseling work with families in moderate circumstances. The underachieving child from a culturally impoverished home background rarely finds his way to individual study. He is usually lost in a group of underachieving children. There is no diagnostic problem involved when a child of an impoverished family who takes no interest in his school career does poorly in school. The problem is to find an effective treatment. Remedial action has to proceed along a broad sociological front. However, values are not homogeneous within a social class structure. It cannot be assumed from the home address that a specific family sets great store by intellectual achievement. Considerable stress may be put on material possessions and external appearances. An intellectual attainment, even in this day and age, is not a straight-line way to riches. A common expression indicates cynicism about the value of knowledge: "It's not what you know that counts, it's who you know." A child brought up on this general philosophy naturally looks for shortcuts—intellectual "contacts" rather than intellectual "contents."

Parents alone cannot create a serious learning disorder. In almost every case there is some constitutional compliance from the child. This constitutional compliance may be in the form of an organic factor or a temperamental predisposition toward passivity or inability to tolerate frustration. On the other hand, there are instances where the parents contribute more than an even share to the problem.

Some of the specific mechanisms by which parental behavior can interfere with the child's ability to use his intelligence merit discussion. Obviously, this list is representative rather than exhaustive of all of the possibilities. Also, the mechanisms are by no means mutually exclusive. It is entirely possible for one set of parents to be involved in more than one way in the production of a learning inhibition.

1. Early childhood training. --A child has many experiences with education and instruction before he enters school. His parents are his first teachers. It is easy to see that if his early training has been coercive, there is likely to be a residue of resentment against authority figures. These feelings, which have their origin in the parent-child relationship, are easily transferred to the teacher-child relationship. The teacher then inherits an unwilling pupil, one who resists her authority, her knowledge, and her demands for performance.

There is another side to this same coin: expecting too little rather than too much. Training experiences of the first few years provide the prototypes for later learning experiences of a more formal nature. Toilet training illustrates the principles involved. If toilet training is done very early, the child is conditioned on a physiological, involuntary basis; he is simply a passive partner. On the other hand, if it is delayed until the child trains himself, the mother is the passive partner. The child does not learn to work at something for the sake of winning the approval of someone else. The mother's neutrality means that she has not been involved in the child's motivation. If she shows no pride in his accomplishment, then the child has no special pride either. It should be pointed out that the mother who delays in one crucial area of training, for whatever reason, is likely to delay in other areas, such as self-feeding and self-care in dressing, bathing, and toileting. Some time between birth and maturity every normal child learns these skills, but it makes a difference when and why. If he learns them belatedly, out of sheer necessity, the experience does not particularly contribute to the development of ambition. If these early achievements have been encouraged, recognized, and rewarded, the child incorporates the mother's sense of pride and can be proud of himself for a job which he does well.

2. Parental management of childhood curiosity.-- The parents have ample opportunity, not only to teach their child to perform, but also to teach him to wonder. Although curiosity is thought of as something which everyone favors, this holds true only for intellectual curiosity on impersonal topics. The more troublesome subjects which are of concern to an intelligent young child include questions regarding sex differences, the origin of babies, death, religion, and so forth. It is easy for adults to underestimate the thinking power of preschool children. It is assumed that they think or feel only that which they put into words. Parents tend to ignore those signs of curiosity which would lead to their embarrassment or discomfort. There are other kinds of questions, too, which are discouraged by parents. For instance, the author has found that a significant number of children with learning difficulties have had the experience of serious illness in a close member of the family. Even though attempts are made to keep illness hidden from a child, he reacts to the change in the emotional atmosphere of the home. He senses the worry and anxiety, and if the subject is taboo, he is afraid to ask questions or to share his worries with anyone.

Hellman[13] describes the treatment of three mothers of children with intellectual inhibitions to demonstrate the close bond between mother and child and how the mother's lying and secretiveness force the child to seem stupid and incurious. In these particular cases the secret had to do with marital infidelity. Inhibition of curiosity on any emotionally charged subject--sex, marital conflicts, antisocial escapades, alcoholism, serious illness--can be displaced onto other topics, even those remote from the original source of conflict. Unconsciously, the child says, "O.K., if I have to stop thinking about this or that which I would really like to understand, the only way I can do it is to stop thinking altogether." Curiosity cannot be compartmentalized and restricted to the safe subjects presented in school.

3. Parental management of childhood aggression.-- The importance of

ambition and curiosity in school performance is clear. It is not immediately obvious how aggression connects with learning. Often, aggesssion is considered only in terms of hostile affect, or antisocial behavior. It is used here in a broader sense, almost synonymous with activity. Learning is work which requires the expenditure of energy; the child cannot be an inert, passive recipient of instruction. He must have the energy to be inquisitive, to penetrate, and to persevere against obstacles. There are several lines of evidence to suggest that the overtly aggressive child has a better prognosis, at least from the intellectual standpoint, than the overly submissive child. In his comparative survey of 100 learners and 100 nonlearners referred for psychiatric consultation, Harris[14] reports that learning difficulties are associated with both extremes of aggressiveness and submissiveness, but the overly aggressive nonlearner is intellectually brighter than the overly submissive nonlearner. This finding is corroborated by the data of Sontag, Baker, and Nelson[15] from individual case studies of children who showed marked increases or decreases in measurable intelligence over a period of time. According to these studies, the passive, infantile dependence pattern led to a decreasing level of the Binet performance; the aggressive, competitive, independent pattern, on the other hand, led to progressively advanced Binet performance. Sperry, Ulrich, and Staver remarked that "the boys whose activity in school annoys the teacher and interferes with their work seem to be in a psychologically more favorable position eventually to achieve in school."[16] This is worth special note because the overtly aggressive, overactive boys are usually the despair of their teachers, while the passive, compliant youngster often elicits a great deal of sympathy.

The passive child is remarkably difficult to rescue, and it takes time to appreciate the subtle difficulties involved. He appears agreeable and willing but he does not keep anything in mind. He makes no effort on his own initiative; he forgets his interim assignments; and so on. Study of the home situation of these youngsters may show that the parents have required denial of all hostile feelings or aggressive action. Many times these passive youngsters have been taught, directly and indirectly, by parental example to submit to almost any indignity for the sake of being liked. With the total renunciation of aggression, there is a corresponding depletion of energy and a pathetic absence of ambition to succeed.

4. Interplay between mothers and sons. --Youngsters frequently have a pattern of behavior which involves them with their mothers on any number of issues at home as well as at school. They dawdle while dressing in the morning; they mislay their belongings; they do not finish their club projects; they do not practice on their musical instruments; they bicker with their siblings; they do not brush their teeth or take a bath without nagging; they are sloppy and messy at the table. They rarely get into serious trouble and behave better away from home. Briefly, parents and teachers describe such a child as irresponsible and immature and remark, "You have to keep after him all the time." In disposition the child himself may be happy-go-lucky even though he complains that he is nagged and hounded constantly.

The clinical question is whether the child himself requires this close surveillance and supervision, or whether it is provided gratuitously. It is clearly a problem of

interaction: the mother feels that her continued close attention is justified by the child's indifference and indolence; the child, in his turn, feels that since his mother is always after him anyhow, it might as well be for some good reason. It is equally unclear to both parties as to who has the real responsibility for what. Despite the mother's protestations to the contrary, she behaves as if she were responsible for the child's successes or failures, and the child agrees with her behavior rather than with her words. One fourth grader was honestly indignant when he was reproached for his failing grade in spelling. His explanation to his mother was, "It's not my fault. You forgot to take the spelling lists out of my coat pockets." It is natural for mothers to feel a narcissistic involvement with the successes or failures of their children. It is a question of degree. The process of psychological detachment is a difficult one. But as long as the parent continues to feel that he or she is the one who is responsible for the child's performance, the parent feels the anxiety and the motivation that more appropriately belong to the child. To some extent, this is fostered unwittingly by teachers who look first to themselves and then to the parents for an explanation of a child's unsatisfactory progress. The parent is afraid to withdraw her forcefulness lest the school personnel consider her lax or disinterested. Parenthetically, it should be stated that a parent can be interested and supportive without forcing. It is a question of who takes the initiative and who feels the shame of failure or the pride of success.

In an extreme form, the interplay provides the basis for the acting out of unconscious aggression on both sides. The child may feel that he is loved or unloved simply in terms of his level of performance; that the parent cares about nothing else. In one way, this gives a child a sense of insecurity; on the other hand, it also provides a powerful weapon against the parents. Refusal to do well in school can be a way of getting even without any conscious or overt expression of aggression. It is a particularly efficient symptom because the child feels no inner guilt; the symptom itself brings enough punishment from the outside so that he does not punish himself with guilty feelings. The parent-child interplay around the subject of schoolwork is reminiscent of the interplay which may go on with preschool children around eating. Although the parent can provide the invitation, the attractive opportunity, the example in behavior, and some limitations, he can force a child neither to eat nor to learn. Basically, both functions arise from the inner drives of the child--hunger in the one instance; a combination of curiosity, desire to master the environment, wish to grow up, and desire to meet high standards in the other.

5. Fathers of sons with learning problems. --In most reports of parental contributions to childhood psychopathology, the mother is the central figure of study and the father is a shadowy creature in the background. Particularly in the case of learning problems of boys, the father's part seems fully as important as that of the mother. Grunebaum, Hurwitz, Prentice, and Sperry[17] make some interesting observations of the fathers of sons with primary neurotic learning inhibitions. These are based on eighteen elementary school boys, all from homes without gross social pathology. The learning problem was the major complaint in each case, although enuresis was also present in nine of the eighteen. Although the social class level of the eighteen fathers was predominantly lower-middle and middle-middle class, the fathers themselves regarded their

achievements as failures. They devalued the importance of their work and described it as tedious, insignificant, and stultifying. The authors remark: "The readiness of these men to accept a self-derogatory role with an attitude of helpless resignation was impressive."[18] In contrast, the husband perceived his wife as a superior person, an opinion shared by the wife. Whether in reality the wives were so much more able than the husband was questionable.

This kind of family situation is conducive to the formation of a learning problem for a number of reasons. First, there is an unspoken expectation on everyone's part that the child will fail also, despite the conscious statement to the contrary. Secondly, the possibility of the child's not failing, that is, succeeding in a way the father could not, may bring the child into a new set of conflicts--jealousy in the father, oedipal guilt in the child, and excessive admiration or resentment from the mother, depending on her neurotic structure. These reactions to a child's superior achievement do not come if the father's failures were determined by outside events rather than by his own personality difficulties. The immigrant father, the father who had to start work at an early age, or the father who never had a chance to attend school can enjoy his son's success vicariously, thinking all the while that the same could have been his except for unlucky circumstances. But the father who considers himself a failure despite ample opportunity to be otherwise has much more conflict about his son's achievements.

Still a third way in which this sort of family constellation affects the son's learning performance is in the identification process. The boy's view of achievement, competition, and masculinity is distorted so that femininity is associated with achievement and competitiveness and the life of a grown man has no drawing power. If the father obviously dislikes his work, there is nothing for the boy to anticipate except more tedium and onerous responsibility. The boy is on the horns of a dilemma: to follow the passive, weak, but masculine role of the father; or to be more active, competitive, and achieving in the aggressive manner of the mother. With such a conflict choice, passivity as the easier of the two alternatives usually wins out.

In discussing the influence which parents have on the learning difficulties of their children, the emphasis has been on interrelationship factors. Learning is an interpersonal process involving someone in the role of teacher and someone in the role of learner. It requires the acceptance of the authority of the teacher and the permission and encouragement to be actively curious, to be knowledgeable, and to be successful. In this, the child responds in accordance with his experience in the preschool years. He also reflects the conscious and unconscious wishes of the parents, and it is easy to see the importance of the identification with perceived parental behavior. This might lead us to the simple conclusion that if we change the parents, we will change the child. In some cases we can do exactly that. In other cases, we fail either because the pathology of the parents is hard to reach, or because the problem has become internalized in the child. In the latter instance, the learning inhibition is a defense against anxiety, the source of which is unconscious to the child.

What is the nature of the teacher's contribution to the identification and treatment of underachievment, particularly at the secondary level? The answer to this query can be considered in three parts. First, the teacher should take a diagnostic view of the individual child in question. The child's performance in other subjects and in past grades should be reviewed to determine if a) it is a widespread problem or related specifically to one subject, and b) if it is an acute or chronic difficulty. Teachers are sometimes reluctant to go over past records and teachers' reports for fear that it will prejudice them somehow against the student, but sometimes a review of the past reveals that the pupil has made significant progress although he may still have a long way to go. In such a case, one would want to praise and encourage rather than exhort and sermonize. In another case, review of the past may show that the present difficulties are new and may reflect a slump related to adolescent growing pains, or perhaps some special reality crisis in the home. Yet another case may prove to be a "hard-core" under-achiever of long standing, perhaps much-tutored and much-treated and unlikely to show dramatic changes in a short space of time. The diagnostic look at the child should also include correlating his achievement with his ability as measured on standardized tests to safeguard against expecting too high standards of excellence and output.

Second, the teacher should try to become acquainted with the child and vice versa. Becoming acquainted is not the same thing as a diagnosis. Hopefully the teacher can arrange at least one individual conference for "just talking." This should not be conceived of as "special help" where the teacher says, "Now this is what is wrong and this is what you should do." Rather, the child should have a chance to participate and to express his opinions freely about the subject, the class, school, or life in general. He will not open up, of course, to a rhetorical question such as "Tell me why you are not doing your homework?" but a question such as "Do you think we are too strict here at school?" is much more likely to elicit a response. Then it becomes a question of listening him out, neither agreeing or disagreeing, but simply respecting his right to an opinion in the fashion of Voltaire. In such situations, parents and teachers are likely to be drawn into an argument, to try to defend themselves or to point out the irrationality of the teen-ager's complaint. This usually gets nowhere and confirms the adolescent's conviction that adults can't understand. They are much more impressed with a good listener who is slow to inject an opinion and gives the youngster a chance to right himself.

A teacher may ask if this is not properly the job for the guidance counselor or psychologist. In my opinion, the personal relationship between teacher and pupil is all-important in the learning process and anything which fosters a better understanding between the two should be done. However, if the interviews become very time-consuming, if the pupil becomes too demanding or too intimate, or if the pupil expresses a great number of personal worries and problems, the teacher would be well advised then to suggest to the student that he arrange to see the counselor who is better equipped to advise him on some matters. But in this age of increasing specialization, there is a danger that anything which borders on the "psychological" is automatically passed off to someone else.

Finally, the teacher should look at himself and his teaching methods, particularly if he has a disproportionate number of "under-achievers." Teachers, like anyone else, can have temporary slumps when they are devitalized and uninspired. No one, parent, child or teacher, operates at peak efficiency 100 per cent of the time. However, a depression in spirits and energy which lasts over months will certainly cut down on one's effectiveness as a teacher. He, or she, should have the personal courage to face this squarely and look for a possible cause, whether it stem from the teaching situation or outside.

Another possibility is that the teacher is bored or frustrated with his professional activities, bored because he has been doing the same thing too long, frustrated because he is disappointed in the results which he sees, or does not see. Here the teacher, like his pupil, can benefit from informal, relatively impersonal consultations with colleagues or supervisors. It is a smart teacher who spontaneously asks someone to watch him and offer suggestions. Even if one does not agree with the offered suggestions, they give a new look on the old material and stimulate thought. Disagreement as to how something should be taught is healthy because it forces both sides to think more about what they are doing and why. One should not be overawed by the hierarchy in teaching institutions and feel forced to submit to imposed programs. Such a milieu is deadening to individual initiative on the teacher's part and the dulling effect is likely to be felt by the pupils in turn.

This brings us to the most important contribution which the teacher makes to the achievement of her pupils, namely, the model which she offers for the pupils to follow. Particularly teen-agers are looking for new idols in the adult world as they try to emancipate themselves from their parents. They are hungry for people to imitate, new figures with whom to identify. They may be hypercritical at times, but they are also easily impressed. A teacher who is himself interested in many things, enthusiastic, verbally articulate, genuinely curious about people and the world at large, logical in his own thinking, eager to collect and present facts, tolerant and empathic with the adolescent mind, will inspire his students to be likewise. Such a paragon of perfection would not cure every "under-achiever," but he would have the satisfaction of knowing that he did everything possible in his role as a teacher.

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READING SKILLS IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

by Esther J. McConihe, Ph.D.

It is the purpose of this article to present a summary of the basic reading skills which are necessary to the junior high school student if he is to succeed in his study and learning. In some instances these are skills that have been presented in the earlier grades but require continuing attention. Some are skills already learned which are now taking on new significance as the child's learning becomes more complex. In other cases, they are new skills. In all cases they are essential to further learning.

VOCABULARY SKILLS

Because words are the bricks in the wall of meaning, primary emphasis must be placed on vocabulary development. In thinking about this phase of reading improvement the teacher needs to be aware that this is a two-fold development. The student must develop new concepts, that is, enlarge his understanding of more words, and he must continually improve his methods of word attack.

First, word attack. Junior high school students should have continuing training in the three word-attack methods: context, word analysis and structure, including phonics, and use of the dictionary. In junior high school the reader needs to develop these skills at a more complex level than has been the case in the first six grades. The first method named, contextual approach, includes: 1) using the sense of the sentence and paragraph, 2) checking against his own experience, 3) substituting adequate synonyms, and finally 4) checking all this with a dictionary. For some students this will be the most fruitful method but for those whose reading experience has been impoverished, much more study is necessary.

The second approach, word analysis, includes knowledge of syllabification, affixes, roots, and basic phonetics. These skills have been presented in earlier grades but it is unwise to assume that students know how to use them. In junior high school the most fruitful method of teaching them is a combination of workbook and classroom contact drill. By the latter I mean that having been taught how through the use of good workbook drills, the student be given repeated opportunity to apply his knowledge to words he encounters in assigned reading. Teachers should be aware that the more capable, intellectually, the student is, the more benefit he derives from word analysis drill. Hence for the less able rules should be simplified and held to a minimum and practice should be as near the functional, everyday experience as possible. Dictionary study, which is included in both the preceding methods, becomes a more important skill now and should include formal training in entering and using the dictionary itself. His dictionary, for example, is bigger and has more comprehensive entries. Guide words and pronunciation keys are entering wedges in the use of this valuable tool. Training should be given in understanding the format of the dictionary so that the derivations, the several definitions from which he must select the one appropriate to his context, and synonym-antonym information are understood and assimilated. Time should be spent on how to use the dictionary and, more important, these skills should be incorporated as part of daily study practices so they become standard procedure. They are as much study skills as reading skills.

Second, concepts. The child has been developing concepts since his early beginnings, some more effectively than others. Now he continues to do so but on a

more specialized and highly accelerated level. To acquire these concepts quickly he will need to use all the word attack and word building skills effectively but he will, in addition, have to conceptualize his learning. He will need to bring his own experience into use and where this is limited, the teacher will have to supply experiences. Where he has had no background training in visualizing, he will need to be helped to visualize. Following directions, for example, is a situation where good visual imagery is an aid. But usage is the ultimate test so the student must have constant, unending experience with the new concept if he is to incorporate it into his body of knowledge.

COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Concurrent with attention to vocabulary and of equal importance is the development of comprehension skills. A listing of the reading comprehension skills which are essential to successful learning would include the following:

1. reading for a purpose,
2. getting the main idea,
3. grasping pertinent details,
4. organizing the ideas in the selection,
5. sensing cause and effect relationships,
6. recognizing the author's viewpoint,
7. reading critically, and
8. drawing conclusions and inferences.

While this list is not all-inclusive it represents skills without which the junior high school reader will be ill-equipped to understand what he reads and to act upon it. These skills must be consciously developed; that is, the classroom teacher needs to keep a check list for his own reference and teach them as part of classroom learning.

But they should not be taught in isolation. They must be a part of "the way to read." For example, a ninth grade English class reading The Ransom of Red Chief may, first, decide what the purpose is, why they are reading it, what they can expect to learn. If the story or essay is particularly remote from their experience or difficult to understand, the teacher might say, "You should be reading this to find out how this author feels about the King's treatment," or "Your purpose in today's chapter is to watch for the contrast between the way these two boys look at their parents." Purpose sets the stage, so to speak. It is, in part, readiness for learning. It also determines the rate at which one reads. In large measure it is a motivator to attend, hence it improves perception. "Why am I reading this? What can I be expected to learn from it? What does the author want to get across to me?"

Determining purpose also means control over how one reads. "Do I want just the plot? Or do I want to watch how the characters develop?" In the first case, the reader uses main idea rates while in the second he is partly "reading between the lines" so his rate is apt to be more flexible. There are many different purposes for reading. They are determined by the nature of the material, the author's purpose, the reader's purpose and so on. Training in attention to purpose begins early so that by late junior high years it has become an automatic technique.

Knowing how to extract the main idea is a skill needed at all levels of reading. It compounds many other skills so that in developing it the teacher is also teaching shifting rate, knowing purpose using language skills, being aware

of typographical aids and format, to name a few. This is the skill the reader uses when the teacher says, "Read this story to get the plot. Be able to tell what happened." This skill is necessary whenever the assignment is to know what the writer said in general. Later on it becomes the basic skill for previewing material for writing a term paper, for example. To be successful in main idea reading, the student must have command of varying rates (to be discussed later), must be aware of purpose, must know how to use sentence and paragraph development to derive meaning, must use typographical aids and word signals, must be able to follow the organization of the ideas.

A helpful way to start students on the way to good main idea reading is to point out that every sentence has two elements: "subject" (not in the grammatical sense) or a "thing talked about," and "action" or "something said about that subject." "The boy ran." Subject - boy. Action - ran. "Let us now praise famous men." Subject - famous men. Action - we praise. This can then be enlarged into writing headlines first for short paragraphs, then for short selections until the student begins, through a combination of determining purpose and looking for main ideas, to see that the selection has a central theme or thread of idea and that this is essential to understanding what he reads.

The logical next step is to pick up the relevant details. In reading for the main idea he is aware that these ideas are evolved from certain related matter. If he can be trained to sort these details into their logical order, he will read a story, essay or article as a unified whole. He must learn to select the significant details and be aware of why they are significant. This skill is as much logical thinking as it is reading. But some basic techniques can be taught. The students, by perfecting these techniques, can produce better comprehension.

(Isolating the procedures, as I am doing in this article, is done only to get the student started. Very quickly he must be combining, for example, purpose, main idea, relevant details, organization, plus whatever other skills pertain. This is important to remember when working with this age group.)

As you have already realized, the reader who knows the purpose has extracted the main idea and can relate the pertinent details to the main ideas, has been using the organizational pattern of the writing to help himself achieve this result. Let us use an example. Assume the eighth grader is reading an essay. He will be expected to get the theme of the essay. He will have to be aware that he is reading this essay not only to know the theme but to notice how the theme develops, which ideas the writer uses, how he arranges them. In short, the student reading must become aware of the author's outline. One aid to picking up the organization is "joining" or "transitional" words such as "but," "in the first place," "yet," "therefore," "for example," and the like. Good readers use these words to anticipate what the author will say. Junior high school students need instruction to be sure they are aware that such words are signals to meaning and to the organization of the writing. Often the poor reader plods through the print as though each word were of equal importance with every other word. This attention to so-called "transitional" words will help him be aware of cause-effect relationships just as searching for the main idea in sentence, paragraph or essay will help him become

more selective.

It is in the junior high school that the student must become aware that he is entering the adult reading world, that now he will be reading material which has a point of view, that the author wants him to believe something, to accept an idea. So he must be taught to recognize such implications. (Skills 6, 7, and 8) He must be encouraged to "read between the lines," to "guess" at the answers to certain possible outcomes. These skills are best developed under careful supervision so that the "guess" becomes not wild speculation but logical conclusion from the evidence of the written word. "How did Jim's father feel when he saw Jim kick the dog?" Or, "What do you know about Dave from this incident?" Or, "What kind of man would write a story like this?" Or, "What effect do you think Jim's speech had on Huck's life?" The answers must be based in the material, be drawn from it, but they must also transcend it. Such activity is excellent for the classroom because very often the boy or girl who has been performing poorly but who is a good thinker is caught by the appeal to his judgment. He likes the flattery of being asked an opinion and, under group scrutiny, being able to support his opinion. It is a pleasant change, also, to be asked a question that sounds like a game, rather than a check on how well he remembers a given fact, especially when he wasn't interested in the fact to begin with. This ability to do critical reading and to draw conclusions is a logical thinking process as well as a reading process, as we said above of the selection of detail and of relating detail to total essay. But even though this is true, training in the process as a reading skill has definite merit because training will help the student see the relationship between ideas and it will encourage him to bring his own experience to his reading.

RATE SKILLS

Much of the verbiage regarding "speed of reading" which clogs our journals might never have been written had educators taken a good look at the reading process itself. Even a cursory scrutiny indicates that since material is written and read for different purposes and at different levels of difficulty there can be no such concept as "speed" in isolation. Rate is a function of the reader's vocabulary skill, first and foremost. This is a very cogent idea for the junior high school teacher because most inadequate readers in seventh, eighth and ninth grades have impoverished vocabularies and inadequate word skills. But there is danger here. If the teacher, who is very aware of the central importance of the individual word and of need for skill in using the devices available to the student for unlocking the meanings of unknown words, looks upon this as the answer to rate, the student is headed for trouble. It is one of the factors. Somewhere in the borderland between attention to words and attention to the total composition, whether it be essay, story, or history assignment, there must come a fusion of emphasis so that the reader sees words for what they are, clues to meaning which must be set in a total context if they are to have meaning. Analogous to this is what happens when the child is learning to pronounce polysyllabic words. He may see each syllable and pronounce it correctly but not be able to blend well enough to pronounce the word. So a student may, as many students of a foreign language do, get bogged down in the words themselves and fail to comprehend the total idea. Such a student may, by this concentration on words, become that pitiable creature, the word-by-word reader.

To meet this problem the teacher presents the various phases of reading instruction so that easy, rapid reading gets equal time with word attack drills and comprehension training. Easy rapid reading where the purpose is chiefly to get the gist of the plot is the single best method for developing the smooth flow of thought necessary to effective reading. If this easy rapid reading is also highly interesting, the practice is even more valuable. Any one working with poor readers at the junior high level is aware that this last condition is very difficult to fulfill. The simplified texts published by Webster, Singer, Winston, and others, are an attempt to meet this need and are helpful. Some of the lowest level material published by Reader's Digest for this purpose can also be used. Stories dictated by the student, typed and returned to him, may be used in cases of extreme disability. Ingenious teachers rewrite into simple language functional material in which the student has high interest. Spache's "Good Reading for Poor Readers" (Revised, 1960, Garrard Press) contains suggestions. These are just some of the possible ways to meet this problem.

It should be obvious to those who have read the section of this article on comprehension skills that a student who is developing the purpose, main idea, organization, use of "transitional words" in reading must almost of necessity be using various rates of reading. Flexibility of rate should be a built-in factor. It is helpful, though, to conduct rate checks to be sure students are aware that efficient reading is always as fast as the material and the purpose warrant. Studies with college students and adults indicate that most readers have not developed as great flexibility as they could have or as they need. This would appear to indicate that flexibility of rate cannot be left to chance but must be taught. Purpose in reading, which we have discussed as a comprehension skill, is also a rate skill. Phrase reading is a rate skill. Skimming is likewise a rate skill. The preferred method of teaching speed and flexibility is in conjunction with these comprehension skills and after a given level of proficiency in word attack and vocabulary has been established.

SUMMARY

Junior high school students who are inept readers need help in the following areas:

1. Vocabulary training, which includes developing good word attack skills as well as concept development.
2. Comprehension skills in eight areas as follows:
   a. determining purpose
   b. reading for the central thought or main idea
   c. picking up the essential reading detail
   d. organizing material by noting relationships and through the use of "transitional" words
   e. recognizing the author's point of view
   f. sensing cause and effect relationships
   g. critical reading
   h. drawing conclusions and inferences
3. Rate skills, which include habitual use of whatever rate is indicated for effective grasp of meaning.

These must be developed simultaneously so that the student develops the gestalt or the total process. However, as is the case in developing any complex

skill, time out to concentrate emphasis on a particularly complex segment is not only permissible but necessary if the junior high student is to perfect his reading to the point necessary for effective learning.

DIAGNOSING READING PROBLEMS

by Richard Shanahan

Reading is a complex act. This basic concept must be kept in mind when approaching the problem of the diagnosis of reading difficulties. Because reading is a complex function, it is possible for faulty reading habits to occur. These faulty habits vary in complexity in both type and degree. In addition there are physical, emotional, and environmental factors that can greatly influence reading. The person who approaches the problem of diagnosis must be aware that there is no simple "cure all" as an answer to the problem. Diagnosis must delve deeply into the factors that can cause a reading disability.

If a program of reading diagnosis is to be successful, its purpose must be clearly stated. The diagnostician must know not only how to approach the problem; he must know for what purpose he is striving. Simply stated, the purpose of diagnosis is to improve the reader's ability. All the information learned about the student must be of such a nature that it can be used to help the student become a better reader. The old cliché of starting with a student from the point where he is and carrying him forward is especially applicable to reading. The diagnosis should yield a program which most efficiently achieves this end.

The problems of the classroom teacher are compounded, for he must meet the problem of diagnosis with a limitation on the time he can spend on it. For this reason he must choose to make a therapeutic diagnosis rather than an etiological one. The therapeutic is concerned with diagnosing the conditions that are now present in the child in order to give direction to a program of re-education. The etiological is concerned with the causes of the difficulty. Although it would be helpful to know the causes of the difficulty, this type of diagnosis is too time-consuming. In the interest of economy of time the classroom teacher has to limit himself to therapy; to what he can do to alleviate the problem that is presently existing.

These factors demand that the teacher adopt a program that is varied in nature and therapeutic in aim. In setting up such a program care must be exercised that the diagnostic program does not become overly test-centered. There are many tests available which are valuable, but the good diagnosis is more than a collection of test scores. It must consider the person being tested as an individual who is unique. The test scores must be interpreted in relation to the pupil as a whole.

Teacher observation is a valuable tool in achieving this end. As the teacher works with the student he becomes aware of the many factors that make this reading case a unique individual. His personality, his attitude, his environment, his emotional stability and his physical health are all aspects that the teacher can note in his observation of the student in a day-by-day classroom situation.

Conferences with other teachers, interested specialists, and the child's parents are other sources of valuable information about the student.

This type of information can be combined with the results of the tests administered to give a fairly complete picture of the person who has a reading problem. It can help in the construction of a remedial program that takes into account the child's abilities, interests, and limiting factors.

The classroom testing program must employ two types of tests: the survey and the analysis. The survey tests are a type which is used to determine the existence of a problem. The analytical tests are used to determine the nature of the problem.

The survey usually consists of a standardized test which is administered in a group situation. Test results usually yield a fairly adequate reading grade level and an indication of the vocabulary and comprehension ability of the person being tested.

The most significant use of the test is as a rough indicator of those students who have a reading problem. In addition the results of the test can be used to determine the extent and the direction of a more thorough diagnosis. This is valuable to the classroom teacher, for economy of time demands that the diagnosis go no further than is necessary to determine the problem. There is little value in giving a complete battery of tests to a person who is deficient in a small area of reading. The survey helps to avoid this danger. Another valuable use of the test is to determine those students who are so severly retarded that they cannot be efficiently helped in the classroom. These are persons who should be referred to a specialist for a more thorough analysis and individual help.

Usually the survey consists of a standardized test administered to the whole class. The test is one that the classroom teacher has decided would best meet his need. A test of this type which is frequently used for this purpose is the California Reading Test. This device yields a fairly reliable reading grade level. This level represents the frustration point and must be considered as such to be useful. In addition scores on vocabulary and comprehension are given as norms. It is possible to make an item analysis of the test to prepare a profile of the student's strengths and weaknesses. This gives a reasonable picture of a student's needs. These values, combined with the ease in administering the test and the reasonable amount of time the test takes, make it a good survey instrument. There are many other tests which do just as adequate a job as the California Reading Test. This is really a matter of teacher preference. The best test is the one which the teacher feels most adequately meets the needs of his program.

The analytical approach is used to determine the nature of the problem. There are many areas that may need to be investigated through specific tests; the areas tested depend on the weaknesses the teacher has observed through the survey and his own investigation and observation. Some students will need to be tested thoroughly while others need only be checked in a few areas.

Since the student can operate at the frustration level only for very limited periods of time, it is also necessary to determine the level at which he can achieve with the guidance of the teacher (his instructional level) and the level at which he can work without assistance (his independent level). As a rule of thumb these reading levels are approximately a year apart, the independent level being the lowest of the three. Since an informal inventory is usually the most efficient means of determining these levels, it is administered to most students. In addition it is useful in corroborating the indications of the survey. Probably, in most cases, the inventory should be the first step in the analysis. The following steps depend on the teacher's analysis of the needs of the student.

If the student has shown signs of comprehension difficulties, some type of

silent reading test should probably be administered. These tests can be given on a group basis. The results can be used to determine the student's ability to do such things as read for main ideas, read for details, summarize, find specific information, comprehend sentences and paragraphs, and get overall meaning.

Indications of vocabulary problems suggest the need for word recognition and word analysis tests. Through these tests the extent of the sight vocabulary can be learned. The student's ability in using context, his familiarity with sounds of the vowels and consonants, his knowledge of phonic principles, and his efficiency in using structure can also be determined.

Other tests which may be suggested are the tests of visual memory, spelling, knowledge of sentence structure, reference skills, and oral reading ability.

There are many tests available to use to test these different areas. Some can be obtained commercially while others can be devised by the teacher to meet his particular needs. It is wise to use as many group tests as possible, for individual tests are time consuming, and they require the teacher to find activities to occupy the rest of the class while they are being administered.

An example of the type of commercial test available to use in this type of testing is the Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulties. Many of the areas mentioned in the analytical approach can be tested by this test as it consists of both an oral and a silent reading test, a listening comprehension test, word recognition and word analysis tests, visual memory tests, spelling tests and handwriting tests. To give the complete battery is time consuming and unnecessary in most cases. Parts of the test can be used to test those skills in which the student is deficient. Norms are given for many of the parts, but of more importance, many checklists of revealing difficulties are included.

Examples of teacher made tests that are appropriate for the program are the phonics inventory and the phonetic spelling test. The phonics inventory consists of reading various lists of words to the student to determine his ability to hear and recognize the different sounds of the vowels and consonants. The phonetic spelling test is designed to determine the student's ability to spell the different sound combinations. Nonsense words, which illustrate the sounds to be tested, are read to the student and he is asked to spell them.

The analysis approach requires the use of many tests. Whether they are teacher made or commercially prepared is not important. Their thoroughness in bringing to light the student's reading problems is the prime consideration of the teacher who chooses the tests to be used.

Despite the importance of the testing program, it is not the first step in setting up a diagnostic program. The first step should consist of the examination of the data already available about the student from other sources. The school record usually contains much information of value. His past performance in school subjects that require reading as a skill can be indicative of his reading ability. Background information about his physical, emotional, and environmental conditions can be helpful in determining his adjustment in these areas. Intelligence test scores may be compared with achievement test scores to determine whether or not the student is a remedial reader or a slow learner. Practically all of the information contained in his folder can be used by the diagnostician. It is a

valuable source of material.

The diagnostician needs to consider the information he has obtained from the folder in the light of what he has learned about the student through observation, consultations, etc. To gain a complete understanding of the student every source of information must be used.

The next step is the testing program. The survey test is administered and studied to determine the extent and the direction of the analysis.

After the specific tests have been given it is important that all the information obtained about the subject be compiled in one place, whether by a checklist or an anecdotal record. This information is then examined to determine how to proceed with the child's remediation.

In order to prescribe a remedial program the diagnostician needs to make several decisions based on the information he has obtained about the student. He needs to determine first of all if a reading problem actually exists. If it does he must next decide who can most effectively carry out the remedial program. If the case is severe he must refer it to a specialist for further analysis and individual help. If the student is to receive help in the classroom a program must be determined. In determining the program the teacher must decide what type of training is needed and what materials will be suitable. In addition the diagnostician must keep in mind any limiting factors within the child which must be considered.

With the outlining of a program of work, the formal diagnosis is finished. However, informal diagnosis should continue throughout the child's program, for the teacher must always be aware of how the child is progressing and what additional things should be done to help him. It takes a continuous diagnosis to assure the meeting of the basic purpose of diagnosis, improving the reading ability of the student.

THE REMEDIAL READING CLASS IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

by Sara Freeman

Teachers of remedial reading agree that no one method, no special gadget, no one series of books, no single box of materials, no particular classroom organization will transform the reluctant reader into a skillful enthusiastic one. A variety of materials and methods and a fluid organization is necessary.

The poor reader in the junior high school frequently has spotty skills. He may show good comprehension of science materials but poor interpretation of literary material. He may use phonics in attacking unfamiliar words but fail to use structural analysis when it is appropriate. He may not need help with simple dictionary skills, but he may need practice in selecting the appropriate dictionary meaning with the aid of context clues.

Each student in the remedial class has his own constellation of strengths and weaknesses, and the pattern changes shape as instruction proceeds. Diagnosis, then, must be continuous, and an effective program is custom-built on the basis of needs as they are revealed. While many activities will be planned for the whole class, other activities will be planned to meet the special needs of small groups or individuals.

It is suggested that the basic framework of the remedial program consist of:

1) The use of concentrated skill-building materials at the student's instructional level.* Carefully selected by the teacher, this material will help the student review and maintain all the reading skills. Concentrated skill-building material usually consists of a short selection to be read followed by a page of specific exercises. Self-checking devices and progress graphs are useful features of some of these materials. Examples of concentrated skill-building material are listed at the end of this article.

It is important to provide time for pupil-teacher discussion of the responses to the follow-up exercises. Otherwise a student may dutifully mark an answer wrong and fill in his graph, but he may not understand why his answer is wrong.

2) Time devoted to "real reading" in books or magazines that are interesting to the student and easy enough for him to handle independently. High-interest easy materials are sold by a number of publishers and special bibliographies of such materials can be obtained at the public library. George Spache's Good Reading for Poor Readers (Garrard Press) and the Durrell and Sullivan High Interest Low Vocabulary Book List are especially helpful. These lists are annotated to indicate the readability level as measured by scientific formulae and the interest level as judged by experienced teachers.

A list of books selected for some seventh grade boys who are reading at about the third and fourth grade level is provided at the end of this article. Similar lists can be prepared for girls or for boys and girls reading at various levels.

If the time allocated to this "real reading" is at the beginning of the class period, the activity is not likely to be squeezed out in favor of constant skill-buildin-

* Diagnostic procedures are described elsewhere in this bulletin.

Teachers are cautioned to maintain a very hushed atmosphere during this reading period; some poor readers are highly distractible, although because the material is appealing, most students become absorbed in their reading.

It is suggested that the students write summary-type reports on a few of the books they read. The summary book report requires the reader to identify main ideas and over-all themes, an important comprehension skill.

3) Time devoted to reading aloud to the class from good quality books that the students might not otherwise encounter. A list of suggested books is appended. Some of those books might be taped by the teacher so that the student can follow the text in the books as he listens through earphones to the teacher's voice reading the material.

4) Time devoted to instructing small groups or individuals as needs are revealed.

For students who are very weak in word attack skills, phonics and structural analysis can be reviewed by the teacher without the use of any special gimmicks. A sequence that is usually successful proceeds from regular patterns to semi-regular patterns to irregular patterns in English words, as follows:

a) Select from the student's recognition vocabulary some monosyllabic words with short vowel sounds. Make sure the student can sound these words out letter by letter. You might move a card over the letters, from left to right, exposing each letter that the student should sound. Avoid adding uh to consonants by moving the card quickly or by having the student indicate with his lips, silently, how the sound is made. If the student learns to sound each letter in a known monosyllabic word, he will be able to apply this skill to syllables in longer unknown words.

b) Use the same procedure with monosyllabic words that contain long vowel sounds. At this point you can teach (or review) the vowel principles. An inductive approach is recommended.

c) Move to polysyllabic words and review structural analysis in the following sequence: compounds, prefixes, suffixes, syllabication.

d) Assemble lists of words containing: oo, ay, aw, au, ow, ou, oi, oy, etc. Teach these words as words that must be memorized. Rules relating to them are so intricate and the exceptions so frequent that it is more economical to resort to memorization. Context clues are very helpful in identifying these words. Context will help the student decide if oo sounds as it does in spoon, or as it does in look.

Some attention should be given to words that are usually described as utility words. These are words which students should be able to recognize instantly, at sight. Flash-card practice (manually or with the use of tachistoscope or speed-i-o-scope) can be given with the Dolch Basic Sight Word List and Dolch Basic Phrase List.*

To promote growth in vocabulary, the teacher will give attention to word meanings regardless of the activity being directed. The meaning of a word in a specific context as well as its meaning in general must be considered if we are to improve comprehension. The study of synonyms, antonyms and homonyms is helpful

*Garrard Press, Champaign, Illinois.

too. All word study is best approached by using materials the students are presently reading. There is a place for word study apart from the reading selection, however, and the teacher who does isolate this type of study should have students use the words in sentences or select the appropriate word to fill the blanks in sentences written by the teacher. With such exercises, the teacher will help the student develop sensitivity to precise vocabulary.

Richard Boing* discusses types of errors students make when asked to fill blanks in sentences; a study of these errors points up the need for giving directed study of words. They are:

1) Non-pertinent choice: The selection of an irrelevant word indicates a lack of understanding or little concern for meaning.
2) Restricted contextual choice: The selection of a word which fits into a single sentence, but which fails to fit the total context is a common one. This error pattern indicates a need to relate words to lengthier units.
3) Imprecise choice: The selection of a word which is either too inclusive or too specific is an example of this type of error. Such errors call attention to the need for emphasizing precise word usage.
4) Ungrammatical choice: The selection of a word that is grammatically incorrect is another error pattern. Such choices suggest a lack of sensitivity to language patterns and to word function.
5) Confused form choice: The selection of a word which is visually similar to a correct answer indicates a need for more attention to visual discrimination.

Working directly with students will clear up many misconceptions and confusions with resulting increase in comprehension. Through discussion of material in a reading selection the teacher can guide the student in identifying main points and subpoints, in seeing cause and effect, in identifying with characters, in sensing broader meanings, in verbalizing implications, in interpreting figurative speech.

In talking with the student the teacher can clarify such phrases as "tenderfoot," or "a sharp tongue," or explain such literary allusions as "Achilles heel."

In working directly with students the teacher can help them develop the skimming technique to find answers to specific questions, the technique of surveying a chapter as a preview to reading it, how to take notes in preparation for an oral report.

While working directly with students the teacher makes them aware of such clues as first, next, and finally, or to begin with, in the second place, and in conclusion to indicate order of ideas; eventually, at the same time, meanwhile, thereafter, thereupon, presently, then, now to establish time sequence; in other words, indeed, in fact, briefly, that is to say to indicate that material will be repeated in a different way; and for instance, for example, e.g. before giving an illustration.

The teacher of the remedial class usually finds it necessary to give practice in the skill of locating information. While this skill is best taught in a functional setting where the student has immediate use for dictionary, encyclopedia, index,

*Richard Boing - Specific Skills Series, Barnell Loft, Ltd., Rockville, Center, New York.

table of contents and card catalog, the remedial teacher normally isolates these skills, teaches them directly and hopes that the student will apply them in the subject areas as the need arises.

Speeded reading is probably best delayed if basic skills are still weak and such habits as finger-pointing and vocalization are still present. Problems in word recognition and comprehension, obviously, will result in slow reading rate and these problems should be attacked before speed reading is introduced. The very best way to increase speed, most experts agree, is through much reading of easy material. Additional techniques used by many teachers are:

1) following silently as the teacher reads aloud a book on the students' instructional level (tape and earphones might be used);
2) using timed reading selections at a level a year or two below the student's instructional level (in scoring these, speed should not count until there is at least 75% accuracy in comprehension);
3) using a cover card which the student moves down the page to cover material already read-- this helps prevent regressions;
4) having pupils find quickly the place in the book or on the page where a certain item appears; having them see how quickly they can locate a word in the dictionary or topic in an index;
5) discussing with the student the importance of "shifting gears"-- adjusting speed to the purpose for which he is reading and to the difficulty of the material;
6) teaching the student to focus all his attention on the reading task ("Pretend you are alone on a desert island.")

Many authorities believe that poor readers will benefit from perceptual training. Just as the ear is trained to discriminate sounds, they explain, so must the eye be trained to see efficiently.

It is believed that a program of perceptual training will improve visual discrimination, visual memory and the power of concentration. The material for training is usually designed to encourage students to see wholes more readily and to assimilate more visual material at a glance through widening the eye-span.

Materials for perceptual training may be obtained from Keystone View Company in Meadville, Pennsylvania, from Educational Developmental Laboratories, Huntington, New York and from The Society for Visual Education, Chicago, Illinois.

One of the most promising aspects of a remedial reading program is the attention given to efficient study habits. The use of the SQ3R formula* improves general reading performance. Briefly the SQ3R method consists of:

Survey: Make a quick survey of the assignment. Note titles, headings, subheadings, marginal notes, pictures, captions, maps, graphs, tables, diagrams, special lists and discussion questions. The survey will take several minutes. It gives the reader a bird's eye view of the assignment. Students sometimes call the survey "casing the joint."

*Robinson, F. P., Effective Study, New York, Harper and Bros., 1956

Question: Turn the first heading into a question, if possible.

Read: Read to answer your question. Read to the end of the headed section.

Restate: Put the book down and try to state the answer to the question in your own words. If you can't restate the material read, re-read the section. Then restate and make some brief notes.

Now turn the second heading into a question and repeat the process of read and restate. Do this for each headed section.

Review: Look over your notes and try to restate main points as well as subtopics.

Another important responsibility of the remedial teacher is helping students read effectively in the specialized subject areas. In addition to attention to the specialized vocabulary in each of the subject areas, the teacher should actually work with science, social studies and arithmetic selections. Nila Banton Smith in her introduction to the Be a Better Reader Series points out five distinctive patterns of writing in science. She describes them as follows:

1) Classification pattern: living things or objects are classified and their likenesses and differences are pointed out.
2) The technical explanation of processes, usually accompanied with diagrams, necessitating very careful reading and continuous reference to the diagrams.
3) Experiments which consist largely of explicit directions that must be carried out exactly and which call for the formation of a conclusion.
4) Problem-solving sections, in which a problem is stated and explanations are made of how scientists have solved the problem.
5) Sections of text which do not partake of any of these patterns, but instead simply give "straight-from-the-shoulder" factual information about some science topic. Such material is usually packed with details and is difficult to read.

The major task of the remedial reading teacher in the junior high is to help the student improve his basic reading and study skills and to promote life-long habits of reading.

To be effective, the remedial program makes use of many kinds of reading material of varying degrees of difficulty. The teacher is flexible in her planning and sensitive to the students' interests. The gains in skills usually shown by the students and their delight in some of the especially selected books makes the effort spent in extensive planning worthwhile.

*Smith, N. B., Be a Better Reader Series, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

CONCENTRATED SKILL-BUILDING MATERIALS

Boing, Richard	Specific Skill Series Barnell Loft Ltd. Rockville Centre, New York
Kottmeyer & Ware	Conquests in Reading Webster Publishing Co. St. Louis, Missouri
McColl-Crabbs	Standard Test Lessons in Reading Bureau of Publications Teachers College Columbia University New York
Parker	S. R. A. Reading Laboratory Science Research Associates Chicago, Illinois
Smith, N.B.	Be a Better Reader Prentice-Hall Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey
Stone & Grover	Practice Readers Webster Publishing Co. St. Louis, Missouri
----	Readers Digest Skillbuilders Readers Digest Educational Publ. Co. Pleasantville, New York
----	Educational Developmental Laboratories Study Skills Library Huntington, New York

SOME BOOKS TO READ ALOUD

Remedial Class - Junior High

Buff . . . . . Big Tree
Commager, H.S. . . . . America's Robert E. Lee
DeAngeli, Marguerite . . . . Door in the Wall
DuBois, W. P. . . . . Twenty-one Balloons
Edmonds, W. D. . . . . The Matchlock Gun
Forbes, Esther . . . . . Johnny Tremain
Gates, Doris . . . . . Blue Willow
Henry, Marguerite . . . . . King of the Wind
Holling, H.C. . . . . Paddle to the Sea
Judson . . . . . Abraham Lincoln
Kelly, Eric . . . . . The Trumpeter of Krakow
Kipling, Rudyard . . . . . Jungle Book
Kjelgaard, Jim . . . . . Big Red
Krumgold . . . . . Onion John
Lenski, Lois . . . . . Cotton in My Sack
Malcolmson, A. B. . . . . Yankee Doodle's Cousins
Pyle, Howard . . . . . Some Merry Adventures of Robin Hood
Rawlings . . . . . The Yearling
Rounds, Glen . . . . . Ol' Paul, the Mighty Logger
Seredy, Kate . . . . . The Good Master
Shapiro, Irwin . . . . . Casey Jones and Locomotive No. 638
Sperry, Armstrong . . . . . Call it Courage
Stevenson, R. L. . . . . Treasure Island
Treffinger, Carolyn . . . . . Li Lun, Lad of Courage
Twain, Mark . . . . . Adventures of Tom Sawyer
Wadsworth, W. C. . . . . Paul Bunyan and His Great Blue Ox
Yates, Elizabeth . . . . . Amos Fortune, Free Man

Sample Booklist for Seventh Grade Boys in a Remedial Class

AUTHOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER
Anderson	Friday, The Arapaho Indian	Wheeler
Anderson	Squanto and the Pilgrims	Wheeler
Anderson	Pilot Jack Knight	Wheeler
Anderson & Regli	Alec Majors	Wheeler
Bamman	Hunting Grizzly Bears	Benefic
Bamman	Lost Uranium Mine	Benefic
Beals	Chief Black Hawk	Wheeler
Bishop	Five Chinese Brothers	Hale
Bulette	Adventures in Space	Follett
Carson	Peter and the Rocket Ship	Benefic
Carson	Peter and the Two-Hour Moon	Benefic
Carson	Peter and the Moon Trip	Benefic
Clark	First Men in Space	Follett
Coleman	The Sea Hunt	Harr Wagner
Coleman	Treasure Under the Sea	Harr Wagner
Coleman	Submarine Rescue	Harr Wagner
Coleman	Pearl Divers	Harr Wagner
Coleman	Frogmen in Action	Harr Wagner
Coleman	Danger Below	Harr Wagner
Coleman	Whale Hunt	Harr Wagner
Chandler	Cowboy Sam and the Rustlers	Benefic
Chandler	Cowboy Sam and the Indians	Benefic
Chandler	Cowboy Sam and the Airplane	Benefic
Chandler	Young Hawk	Benefic
Chandler	Little Wolf	Benefic
Chandler	Thunder Stick	Benefic
Cordts	Tommy O'Toole and the Forest Fire	Benefic
Daugherty	Andy and the Lion	Hale
D'Aulaire	George Washington	Doubleday
Deming	Little Eagle	Laidlaw
Eisner	Mystery of Broken Wheel Ranch	Follett
Eisner	Buried Gold	Follett
Estep	Pioneer Buckaroo	Benefic
Estep	Pioneer Tenderfoot	Benefic
Everson	Secret Cave	Dutton
Faulkner	Hidden Silver	Scott Foresman
Fletcher	Big Book of Cowboys	Grosset & Dunlap
Heffernan	Desert Treasure	Harr Wagner
Heffernan	Mysterious Swamp Rider	Harr Wagner
Henderson	Why Cowboys Sing in Texas	Abingdon

Booklist (Continued)

AUTHOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER
Hold & Coggins	Lance and His First Horse	McGraw
Huber	Skags, The Milk Horse	American
Hurley	Dan Frontier, Sheriff	Benefic
Johnson	Red Joker	Morrow
Kendrick	Indian Fighters	Follett
Kottmeyer	Greek-Roman Myths	Webster
Kottmeyer	King Arthur and His Knights	Webster
Kottmeyer	Old Testament Stories	Webster
Kottmeyer	The Robin Hood Stories	Webster
Kottmeyer	The Trojan War	Webster
Lawson	Watchwords of Liberty	Little
Mason	Hominy and His Blunt-nose Arrow	Macmillan
Parker	Great Moments in American History	Follett
Paull	A Horse to Ride	Rand
Rambeau	Jim Forest and Ranger Dan	Harr Wagner
Rambeau	Jim Forest and the Bandits	Harr Wagner
Rambeau	Jim Forest and the Mystery Hunter	Harr Wagner
Rambeau	Jim Forest and Dead Man's Peak	Harr Wagner
Rambeau	Jim Forest and the Flood	Harr Wagner
Rambeau	Jim Forest and Lone Wolf Gulch	Harr Wagner
Rambeau	Mystery of Morgan Castle	Harr Wagner
Rambeau	Mystery of the Marble Angel	Harr Wagner
Rambeau	Mystery of the Midnight Visitor	Harr Wagner
Rambeau	Mystery of the Missing Marlin	Harr Wagner
Rifkin	First Adventures at Sea	Follett
Snedden	Docas, Indian of Santa Clara	Heath
Snedden	Docas, The Indian Boy	Heath
Toles	Secret of Lonesome Valley	Harr Wagner
Warner	Boxcar Children	Scott Foresman
Warner	Surprise Island	Scott Foresman
Wassermann	Sailor Jack Goes North	Benefic

ORGANIZING AN INEXPENSIVE PROGRAM IN REMEDIAL READING

by John C. Ingersoll

The adjustment of the remedial reading program to the needs of individual students should be a continuous process in the junior high school. Individual interests, purposes, and individual degrees of readiness are some of the important elements to be identified and coped with while still maintaining a realistic budget.

Reasons for Reading Retardation. It should be noted that three areas of retardation are considered: (1) school-centered, (2) individual-development-centered, and (3) home-centered. While it is apparent that most reading problems will be a combination of the areas mentioned above, for purposes of emphasis, each area will be considered separately.

School-centered. Pupils who enter school at too early an age are consequently not physiologically ready for the beginning of reading instruction. An example of physiological readiness deals with the development of the eye. During the normal development of the child's eye, it passes through a period called "infantile farsightedness." This is usually completed by the age of 6.5 years or when a child is half-way through first grade. Latest studies show children are in this condition sometimes until eight years old or older. Older students who have a problem of farsightedness might also be considered in this area. Studies again show that a significantly higher proportion of poor than good readers have been reported with farsightedness. With moderate amounts of farsightedness, normal or better than normal vision for distant objects is often found; it is possible for the farsighted person to bring near objects into clear focus, but long continued attention to near objects, as in reading, tends to produce eyestrain with accompanying fatigue and headaches. This does not make readers.

Another contributing factor concerned with reading retardation in the school environment is the frequent change of schools during kindergarten through third grade. Often, one will find different schools using different vocabularies and different methods of reading instruction. Invariably the instruction is sequential from grade to grade, and when the sequence is broken, the destroyed sequence often results in a frustrated child and a retarded reader.

Frequently, extended absence during the early years of school is another important factor in reading retardation. The pupil misses important basic skills that he is never able to pick up. Situations of this nature can be and have been corrected at the junior high level with the pupil making a complete recovery. Such a degree of rehabilitation would not have been possible without the special consideration a remedial reading program can offer to potential readers in the junior high school.

Individual-development-centered. Quite often we find the retarded reader has a late but regular development pattern. It might be noted that the child is growing normally in reading, but is constantly behind the norm. Some of the circumstances that contribute to late but regular development patterns are: (1) vision or hearing loss, (2) temporary vision or hearing loss as a result of childhood diseases such as measles or mumps that may have been undetected, or (3) an accident or a prolonged sickness where the child's only outlet was reading; such a situation is quite likely to bring unpleasant associations, and consequently create dislike of reading.

Auditory perception or the inability to distinguish between words which sound somewhat alike may prove a severe handicap in learning to read better or learning to read at all. In some children it is due to faulty hearing. In many other children, the hearing acuity may be normal, but the child has not learned to perceive the differences in the sounds of the words. Deficiency in auditory sensation or perception often results in the persistence of infantile pronunciation. If a six-year-old still pronounces his r's like w's, or mixes up his th and v sounds (muvver for mother) or slurs and mispronounces words of more than one syllable, the chances are good that he does not notice the difference between his pronunciation and correct pronunciation. If a child does not hear the difference between the words, he will have difficulty distinguishing between their printed symbols. Such children also have difficulty learning the sounds of the letters.

Home-centered. The home sometimes contributes to reading retardation in the following ways: (1) If a foreign language is spoken in the home, it may cause confusion in sounds, and a disturbance in phonics. (2) In many homes, reading is not valued highly. (3) Pupils do not have a quiet place for reading. (4) Other activities such as TV do not allow the student time to read.

The General Approach for Treating Deficiencies.

1. Describe each person's difficulties. This is done after careful analysis of his responses to a series of inventories, conferences, and a standardized test.

2. Attempt to determine the causes for reading difficulties. The above analyses and folder information can be used here. Also check the child's health record and vision.

3. If the cause is determined and it can be removed, do so.

4. Work toward having the student separate his reading problems from other possibly related problems.

5. Design and follow an individualized practice program.

As soon as possible after the opening of school, administer a standardized test in reading. Examination of the pupil's most recent test scores will indicate the level of the test to be used. Seventh grade students will usually be measured by an elementary level test. Only the records can determine the appropriate test for eighth and ninth grade students.

The test is administered as a power test, disregarding directions about timing. Each child should have the opportunity to attempt answering each question. Because of this use of the tests, Bett's interpretation of the grade score as the frustration level score is most suitable.

Size and Characteristics of Remedial Classes. The class size of remedial reading classes should be no more than "average" in number. Students are selected partially on the basis of test results; pupils who score two years below the national norm in comprehension are candidates. Since our chief interest here is reading comprehension, the total scores are disregarded because they are frequently colored by vocabulary scores.

Students are also considered as candidates for remedial reading classes on the recommendation of teachers. Possible candidates for remedial reading classes are screened through a series of conferences involving the reading consultant, counselor, referring teacher, principal and parents. Screening also involves perusal of the permanent record, giving informal inventories, and possible testing.

The classes generally contain more boys than girls. At the beginning of the year, seventh grade classes have had the ratios of 3:2 through 5:2. In the eighth grade classes we find a few more boys than girls. However, ninth grade classes may contain three boys for each girl.

Class population changes are to be somewhat expected in these classes. Changes are made after the first six-week period when some students will be found not in need of remedial instruction or students who are in other English sections may be changed to the appropriate section. Since there is a three to four month time lag between the original spring scheduling and the school's fall opening, correction might take place during this time--in summer school, through tutoring, or with maturation. Again, from time to time, students are admitted to remedial class as their needs are recognized.

During the school year we can expect a range in gains from 1 to 4.0 years in each class. The mean gain should be about 1.5 years. The records at Euclid Central Junior High indicate 60% of the students will show sufficient recovery to join an average section of English. A follow-up study is being made at the present time to determine the effectiveness of the remedial reading program in past years. What happens to the student when he has improved sufficiently to be moved to the average English program? What happens during the high school years and beyond?

Students who make recovery during the junior high years have a unique opportunity at Euclid Central Junior High. The English program provides, in the case of remedial reading recoveries, remediation in composition. Since writing skills tend not to develop before reading skills, the student is placed in a remedial composition section where special techniques are used with students.

The Instructional Emphasis in Remedial Reading Classes. The instructional emphasis is concerned with the development of reading skills. Other language activities are experienced only in so far as they lead to reading improvement. An absolute minimum responsibility is realized with respect to curricular requirements, as delineated in the guides. It is obvious that a person who cannot read adequately cannot learn content material to an appreciable degree. The student will be hampered throughout his life and school career if his deficiency is not corrected. Reading comes first!

Through frequent conferences, inventories, and other devices the student is brought to the point where he recognizes his own problems, desires to overcome these problems, and is constantly aware of growth. The following areas are given consideration in the remedial reading program:

A. Word analysis
    1. Sound/phonic analysis
    2. Phonics instruction
    3. Phonics practice
    4. Word attack skills
    5. Dictionary
B. Sight vocabulary
    1. Basic sight lists
    2. Tachistoscopic training
    3. Phrase reading
    4. Content vocabulary notebooks

C. Reading Practice
   1. S.R.A. Reading Booklets
   2. Reader's Digest Skill Builders
   3. Supplementary texts
   4. Booklist reading
   5. Textbooks
   6. Free reading

D. Discrete skills
   1. Parts of a book
   2. Library
   3. Alphabetical order
   4. Dictionary
   5. Reference and research
   6. Study skills

E. Comprehension skills
   1. Following directions
   2. Main ideas
   3. Details
   4. Relationships
   5. Inferences
   6. Evaluations

F. Reading in the content areas

During the first week of school it is necessary to secure rapport with students and explain the course needs. After this initial phase, testing and inventories are in order. As discussed earlier, the California Reading Test is administered as a power test with particular attention given to comprehension results. In addition to test results a complete battery of inventories is needed to provide individual programs for students. A phonics inventory such as the one given in "How to Teach Reading," by Morton Bobel, may be given to determine needs in this area. This source also provides an easy class summary. On the basis of the class summary, groups can be established within the class.

Before grouping can be attempted with remedial students, a daily routine must be established. The S.R.A. Reading Booklets or Reader's Digest Skill Builders can play an important part in individualizing reading on the basis of reading needs and interests while developing the necessary daily routine.

The S.R.A. Reading Laboratory is a box of 150 short stories and factual stories printed on cards and written at different grade levels, grades two through nine. (A secondary edition runs through grade twelve.) The child begins on a grade level that is about two years below the grade placement of the California Reading Test. The student first reads a story or article and checks the results by using the answer key that is contained in the laboratory. Since each student keeps his own folder, he enters the score and percentage on the graph which gives a quick picture of progress. The S.R.A. fits well into the individualized reading program because it requires no bookkeeping or scorekeeping on the part of the teacher. When the student is able to read

on this level with the prescribed percentage of comprehension, he moves on to the next more difficult level.

With an established routine such as the S.R:A. Laboratory developed, the teacher is now free for individual conferences with students or is free to work with groups that are determined on the basis of inventories. In addition to the inventories described elsewhere, an oral reading check such as the following is valuable in planning future groups and individual work for the students. This inventory, abstracted to fit nearly any reading situation, diagnoses problems of vocabulary, main idea, details, inference, and sequence.

A. Vocabulary Questions
   1. In this heading, what is the key word? Why?
   2. What does _____ mean in this sentence?
   3. What are some of the meanings you already know for _____?
   4. What does the glossary tell us about _____?
   5. How many meanings are given in our dictionary for _____? Which is the probable meaning in this chapter? Why?
   6. What new meaning did you learn for _____?
   7. What word could be substituted for _____ in the sentence without changing its meaning?
   8. In paragraph ____, what word means the same as _____?
   9. In paragraph ____, what word is the opposite of _____?
   10. What is the key word in this sentence (or paragraph)? Why?

B. Understanding Main Ideas
   1. What is (are) the main idea(s) of this story? chapter?
   2. What is the topic sentence of this paragraph?
   3. What would a good headline for this paragraph be?
   q 4. What are the chief points in this proposal?

C. Understanding Details
   1. What facts are given to show that _____?
   2. When did they arrive?
   3. What sentences answer the following questions: _____?

D. Inferential Thinking
   1. What does this mean to you?
   2. What do you think will happen next?
   3. How can you apply the ideas on this page to daily life?
   4. Why did the author write this book?
   5. What kind of person was _____?
   6. What steps should be taken in light of this evidence?

E. Understanding Sequence
   1. What steps do we follow when _____?
   2. What were the first two things that had to be done before _____?

At this time, the teacher and student can work out a schedule for the next week. While all students' schedules may be different, all should be a part of the basic routine mentioned before that begins each class.

During the conference, the teacher would want to discuss with the student his percentage graph and give praise whenever possible. Also suggestions for future work

might be outlined at this time.

When the teacher is not occupied with individual students, the teacher should be involved with groups, such as a group that needs special instruction on a particular phase of phonics.

Although much attention is given to phonics instruction in this read ng program, "sight words" do have an important place in the total instruction pattern.

Basic Sight Vocabulary. A certain number of words, which can be considered "basic" reading words, are found in the Dolch list. The "basic" quality results from their frequency of occurrence in print. Dolch has isolated 315 such words that account for about 60% of the words that occur in print. Since these words are so important, and since many of them are not spelled in a phonetic way, students should not work at sounding them out. Instantaneous recognition is desired and these words should never be used in phonics exercises.

The tachistoscope or flash cards are suitable for practice of basic sight vocabulary. For motivational purposes, the tachistoscope seems to be better suited. Its purposes are training in recognition of basic sight words, checking on distant vision, and motivation.

On the basis of all the information obtained thus far, specialized needs groups can be formed. For example, a basic sight vocabulary group of children needing help at that skill, or, on the basis of phonics inventories, an initial blends group can be created. Activities designed to meet each group's needs can be developed as part of class instruction. The Continental Press of Philadelphia as well as other companies has prepared dittoed worksheets that can be used once the difficulty has been diagnosed. Students who work better at far point might use Dr. Spello Filmstrips for diagnosed difficulties.

Special Techniques. Remedial students listening to a passage on tape while reading seem to progress more rapidly to the next more difficult level. The materials may be S.R.A. cards, Reader's Digest graded reading material, or other graded material that is available. Teacher made tapes used to accompany the graded material must be made so the student is not forced to proceed at a fast rate.

A close examination of the graded material mentioned above will reveal a great number of the basic vocabulary words. Since these words are already a part of the student's speaking vocaulary, he learns to recognize the words very quickly without finding it necessary to resort to word-attack skills. In some cases the basic sight words are learned more quickly when they are heard and seen at the same time and more importantly when the basic sight word is contained in a context.

Some success has been noted with the projection of graded material without a taped reading. Frustration, as measured by length of attention span, breathing, regressions, blocking, and other manifestations, seems to be reduced with this far-point technique.

While this program demands knowledge of reading problems and skill in classroom techniques, it is a reasonably inexpensive program which can be instituted with a minimum amount of materials.

REMEDIAL READING MATERIALS
USED AT EUCLID CENTRAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Seventh Grade

S.R.A. Elementary Laboratory I
McCall Crabbes Standard Test Lessons in Reading
Spelling Magic, Book I
Wings to Adventure

Eighth Grade

S.R.A. Elementary Laboratory II
Webster Practice Readers
Spelling Magic, Book II
Doorways to Discovery

Ninth Grade

S.R.A. Junior High Reading Laboratory
S.R.A. Reading for Meaning Laboratory
Spelling Magic, Book II
Windows on the World
Reading with a Purpose

General

Reader's Digest Reading Skill Builders
Webster Word Wheels
Continental Press materials
Izzy Flash Cards
Spelling Magic Filmstrips
S.V.E. Spediostrips
Projected materials
Visual and auditory methods

REMEDIAL COMPOSITION

by James F. McCampbell

The students in a remedial composition class are special. Much like turtles, they are either withdrawn in a shell or snapping at anything that prods them. To get them to extend themselves, the teacher must create a supportive environment, diagnose their difficulties, and develop methods and materials which will help them move.

Probably these students have a history of chronic problems which stem from their home environment. We know that the most critical age for learning to manipulate symbols is the two to four year old period. Research also indicates that most "problem" students have shown symptoms since the primary grades. Obviously, then, the teacher cannot solve the problems that have been developing for the past ten years, 6/7 of the student's life. What he can do is remove the frustrations which have made it impossible for the student to achieve.

That is, the particular classroom environment is isolated--it is different. And the teacher can so structure that environment that the student finds success in it. While this may not overcome a complex syndrome of problems, it will at least allow the teacher to help the student develop skills and achieve success in the narrow confines of the remedial writing class.

To create such an environment, the teacher must present tasks with which the students can achieve success. The remedial student has had many failures, and every failure is a threat. It says to the student, "You're no good." The student's way to avoid failure is to quit trying. Then, he rationalizes, the reason for the teacher's criticism is not that he can't do the assignment, but simply that he doesn't want to. He thus avoids threats to his ego and at the same time asserts his independence of authority. As this pattern develops he becomes less attentive in class, learns less, becomes a behavior problem, and generally compounds the inadequacy of his work with a belligerent attitude.

Such a pattern can be broken by success. Simple tasks done well in class and praised by the teacher can help the remedial student participate more willingly. Individual attention--to students seldom recognized except as behavior problems--will also encourage participation. Individualization is necessary also because of the student's inability to learn in a normal group situation. Quite often, group instructions which are not followed will be followed if given in exactly the same manner to individuals. Of course, variation in ability and interest also suggests individualized instruction.

English teachers have habits which are particularly likely to frustrate remedial students. First, they fear activity which is not completely under their supervision. As a consequence, students are usually allowed a minimum amount of participation in classroom discussion. Teachers assume that because small student groups arrive at conclusions far more slowly, they are wasting time. This is probably not true. Although students--particularly remedial students--are inclined to get off the topic, usually this misdirection is a sign of frustration with the task at hand. If the teacher will carefully plan the use of small group work so that the students have been given the specific tools necessary to solve the particular problem presented; if he will structure the goal of the group so that it is clearly stated and within the range of the student's ability; and if

he will recognize getting off the topic as a signal of the need for better structure in the situation rather than as a signal to end this opportunity for learning self-direction, then he will find that over the period of a year the students will exhibit tremendous growth in their ability to work in small groups with less teacher direction.

The English teacher also tends to overtalk reading assignments. With a long and thorough educational background in literary analysis and interest in the abstract problems implied in literary works, he tends to deal with works at a level far removed from the students. Careful attention to what students have to say about a story, and careful attempts to move them just a bit from where they are will result in greater willingness on the part of the students to read. Curiously, these remedial students need a great deal of reading material in the classroom. While gifted students see many ramifications in a single work, the remedial students may need many works to develop a single abstraction. As a consequence the teacher must have far more materials available.

Third, English teachers mark themes too conscientiously. We have all had strong reactions toward a paper of ours which was, in our opinion, overmarked. The remedial student's reactions are even stronger. Already discouraged and ready to quit, he responds only to encouragement. Besides, he doesn't know what the marks mean or how to correct the errors which they indicate. For such a student, the comments should be limited to praise.

Finally, these students will not do homework. Many write poorly in a well structured classroom situation where the teacher can provide direction and assistance. It is unreasonable to expect them to be able to work at home. Out of class assignments will simply lead to more failure and less interest.

The previous paragraphs emphasize many specific differences between the teacher's usual behavior pattern and the pattern necessary to create a supportive environment for remedial students. Perhaps the teacher can gain more by considering the general attitude of which these particulars are a part. The gestalt necessary for the remedial classroom is acceptance of the student. We teachers are conscientious, interested, and well prepared for our classes. We are middle class, with all the goal-directed, social characteristics that term connotes. And we fail to understand people who are otherwise. If a student fails to bring a pencil to class we are always dismayed, often frustrated, and sometimes infuriated. So we set up rules--" Three points off if you don't have a pencil; you can't come to class without your book.". Unfortunately, students sometimes prefer not to come to class. So we take them to the office, perhaps call home, and generally make the students' attitudes toward school much worse.

The tools of learning--books, paper, pencils--are symbols to these students. Honors and average students don't sit in class and tear paper to shreds. Honors and average students don't break pencils into smaller and smaller pieces. These are behavior patterns of the frustrated students; they are releasing their frustrations against the whole cultural institution of education through their behavior toward these symbols. When the students arrive in class unprepared, without pencil or paper, it might be better to simply furnish them. The learning possible with these tools may be more important than the fight over bringing them. If the teacher recognizes the tremendous difference between these students and himself, he will be better prepared to recognize these behavior patterns as effects of the frustration problem, and better able to create

the successes which will remedy the problem rather than dealing merely with the effects.

But the general characteristics of remedial students suggest techniques which seem particularly appropriate. Because these students are usually poorly self disciplined, they need maximum direction. For the same reason, they can't stay with one activity for a long period of time. Because they are not interested in abstractions, their work must be concrete. What techniques fit this pattern?

Spelling is one good subject for these students, even though research shows that systematic spelling drill with lists has little carry-over to writing situations. It is valuable because it is concrete, kinesthetic, easy, directed, and short. It also sets a pattern--a comfortable thing for these students--and gives the students an opportunity to succeed. Monday the students take the pretest dictated by the teacher. The teacher then spells the words correctly for the students and they correct their errors. The teacher collects the papers and corrects them. (Many students will either not have found their errors or will have made a mistake in the correction.) Tuesday these papers are distributed and the students copy on the back the numbers of the words they missed. This time when the words are dictated they write only those they previously missed. Wednesday all students take the full test. Thursday those who had all the words correct are excused from the test; the others take only the words they have missed. Friday all the students take the test. After the first two or three weeks, the students will be familiar with this pattern and the teacher will recognize the best spellers. Then one of the students who gets all the words correct on Monday may be put in charge of the spelling for that week. This both recognizes student accomplishment and frees the teacher to work with individual students.

This activity is not suggested to teach spelling--research suggests that it will not accomplish this end. It is suggested because it begins the class in an orderly fashion, frees the teacher to work with individuals, gives recognition to the best students, and gives everyone a chance to succeed. Excellent lists of words at the students' level can be culled from elementary spelling books and from the students' themes.

Work with sentence patterns can be organized in the same fashion as a short activity to end the period. This structured concrete program at the beginning and end of the period provides a frame of easy work and successful experience which help create a supportive environment.

Within the environment the teacher's first job is to diagnose student abilities and weaknesses. Such diagnosis should cover the areas of idea, organization, syntax, and mechanics. As with remedial reading, the diagnosis should begin at the level at which all students can achieve success and gradually move to more difficult problems.

Boys of remedial writing caliber seldom write anything; the girls often write notes to their friends about dates, boys, and gossip. Yet even these seldom exceed a single page. They are limited in their patterns of thought, and consequently limited in their ability to write. Perhaps the best program for these students would be one which dealt more directly with thinking than with writing, but that is a subject for an entirely different course of investigation. Assuming that we should deal with writing, what types of problems can we find with which they can deal successfully? A relatively superficial analysis of writing tasks suggests a possible sequence of difficulty.

1. Writing a summary of a short story is a very easy assignment. The ideas are directly available and already organized. Nearly every student can

successfully write about such a topic.

2. Next in difficulty comes the personal narrative. Students will have little difficulty in recalling events, and they are still chronologically organized. The greatest difficulty of this assignment will be assisting the students in filling in the necessary description to round out the writing.

3. Pure description calls for more acute observation and/or imagination than these students are used to using. But these are available to the students if they can be taught to observe. Also, the organizational pattern is not prescribed but must be developed.

4. Exposition of a process or an abstraction is even more difficult because the ideas as well as the organization must be developed by the student.

5. Perhaps argumentation is the most difficult writing process because the student must develop ideas, organize them, and foresee the opposing arguments which he must answer in his writing.

This pattern of difficulty has no foundation in psychology or learning theory. It is the result of observation and trial in the classroom. It would be presumptuous to assume that this pattern will apply to all students. Some are extremely adept at argumentation, while others find exposition to be their forte. But no matter what individual pattern the teacher diagnoses, this hypothesis can be a place to start.

Should a student be unable to write a summary of an easy short story, he needs immediate attention. If he is unable to follow the chronological sequence, or unable to recognize main ideas and important details, he needs to develop these fundamental skills in a remedial reading class. He should be accepted in a remedial composition class only after he attains these skills. Students who can successfully write a short story summary will furnish the teacher with a basis for diagnosing difficulties in syntax and mechanics.

Marking themes for this purpose is a relatively simple process. Underlining spelling errors, and the usual English teacher shorthand in the margin is adequate. The important emphasis is the use of these marks after they have been made. The specific skills should be remediated only one at a time and only after a sufficient body of writing has been collected to assure that the error is a major problem for the student. Instruction in small groups or with individuals is probably the best approach because these students are seldom able to concentrate on an abstraction presented to the whole class. They are much more likely to respond to individual attention.

It is often possible to let students help each other. When one student has conquered a particular skill, asking him to help others will be a tremendous boost to his ego. Also, such an arrangement again helps free the teacher and allows students to develop their ability to work with less teacher direction.

Organizational ability can be diagnosed from the students' ability to work with description, exposition, and argumentation. Each assignment provides its own difficulties and suggests various patterns for the student to learn.

But the diagnosis of problems is only the first step. The major problem is, of course, how to overcome these difficulties, that is, how to teach. This is of course the problem that each of us faces each period in the classroom. Yet with the good student the problem is minimized. A technique may be presented abstractly by the teacher, objectively understood by the student, and consciously applied until it

becomes a part of his behavior pattern. That is, the technique becomes internalized; it becomes a part of the student. How can we get the slow student to internalize behaviors? Certainly not by merely presenting techniques in abstract form. Instead, we must give the student concrete experience in the use of the technique until its use has been absorbed--perhaps unconsciously. The practice in the use of the technique should be patterned to help the student move from a mimetic performance to an independent performance.

The most obvious mimicry is that of copying exactly. This is the point at which any technique should be introduced. Next, sections of the pattern should be alternately withdrawn so that the student develops his ability to mimic without the entire pattern present. The process should continue until the student can apply the pattern without the aid of a model. At this point, the students should work in small groups so that failures can be corrected without teacher assistance. Of course, the teacher is ready to assist if needed. Also the problem which is to be solved can become less, exactly like those solved through mimicry, so that the students have the opportunity of widening the range of applicability. Finally, the student should apply the pattern to a new situation independently. If he can do this, he shows successful internalization of a behavior pattern.

For example, in a study of courage (adapted from a seventh grade average unit) the students were to define courage. The teaching began with the presentation of several definitions of objects. (A hammer is a tool used for pounding and pulling nails.) After reading these definitions, the class analyzed their characteristics--identification of a class and distinction from other members of the class; then they copied from dictation several other definitions of the same form. Next they were given a worksheet, half of which provided the distinction from other members of the class while the other half provided only the class. Some of these definitions were more abstract qualities such as honesty. After they were asked to write definitions independently, they were asked to collect definitions of courage from at least five people. The next day, while they were reading an essay about courage, the teacher discussed each student's errors with him individually. When the reading was completed, the class discussed the definitions they had collected. As they evaluated them, they copied the best ones. They then analyzed the essay for its definition of courage, and finally small groups wrote their own definitions of courage. They had thus been given a background in both definition form and the concept of courage before they were asked to define courage. Later in the unit, they wrote definitions independently.

In the same unit, the students were asked to write a personal narrative about their need for courage. To prepare for this writing assignment, the class first objectified a pattern that was apparent in the reading they had done: the general scene, specific scene, the need for courage, the show of courage, the result, and a conclusion. After the class had abstracted this pattern, there were four steps to writing an individual composition. First they read and discussed a teacher-written theme about courage. Second, they suggested possible theme topics, selected one at random, and dictated it as the teacher used an overhead projector in writing it. Third, the students wrote another theme of the same type in small groups. Finally, they wrote individual themes. Again, in this more complex area of composition organization, the movement from specific model to independent writing helped them achieve success.

The teacher who has taken the time and effort to develop a program for these students will find in the process of trial those methods and materials which succeed and those which do not. He will find the classroom techniques becoming more and more successful and the teaching situation less and less frustrating. As he sees more accurately the problems of the students and the methods most successful in overcoming those problems he will find himself less interested in the grade and more eager to spend his time in satisfying the needs of his students.

A PROGRAM FOR TEACHING COMPOSITION TO PUPILS OF LIMITED ACADEMIC ABILITY

by Bernard McCabe

The teaching of composition is probably the most difficult and at the same time least rewarding of all the areas included in the English curriculum. An English teacher spends the greatest amount of her time, by far, on student composition. When the composition lesson has been completed and the papers have been read and marked, all too often the teacher has seen no real progress, but instead, can see only the miles that everybody has to go before anybody can get to sleep.

Skill in writing compositions seems to be related to some sort of "native intuition." The degree to which a given student possesses this kind of intuition seems to be the principal factor in determining his proficiency at writing and the quality of his composition product. In every school, at every grade level, there are a considerable number of pupils who appear to lack any such composition intuition. Usually, these pupils possess very little skill at or interest in any of the English studies. Further, their general academic talent is below average. The red scars that point out errors in spelling and mechanics on the papers of these students are so many in number, and the errors themselves so diverse in character, that any comment on such niceties as general organization or style of expression are rendered fatuous.

Frequently, on a given assignment, a student who usually produces a paper of this kind will not turn in to his teacher any composition for appraisal. The teacher who contemplates beyond the immediate lesson sees that this person may not finish high school, will not enter college, and will seek for his vocation some employment which will require an absolute minimum of written expression, if any at all. The pertinent, although complex, question that arises as a result of these insights is "why must either teacher or student be involved, at all, in composition activities?" Certainly, the answer cannot be found by referring to interests, abilities, or needs in terms of life goals. Let us delay for a moment the consideration of the rationale for the program in composition for students of low academic ability.

In planning an instructional program three major factors must be considered. First is the statement of objectives of the program; these objectives are best formulated in terms of observable student behavior. The second problem involves an assessment of student abilities as they are observed at the inception of the instructional sequence. The third problem is the character of that sequence, including decisions respecting methods and techniques that may best be used in moving the students to the goals.

In order to formulate objectives in a program of composition instruction that is to be used with students of low ability in English, it is necessary to return to the problem of the rationale for the program. Presumably, the principal reason for having pupils write compositions is that composition writing is a traditional activity of the educational institution. Without functional skill in composition a student cannot succeed in school. Therefore, we teach our pupils to write compositions because they must know how to write compositions in our schools. Composition writing is expected behavior. This is not merely an academic (no pun intended) point. Since the purpose of composition instruction, in many cases, is entirely intramural, the goals of instruction, and standards for evaluation, can be established on an intramural basis.

The English Department faculty can develop an expression of goals that will meet the needs of the students in a given school. Such an expression may be in the form of "We want our students to write good sentences;" or "We want our students to write a single expository paragraph made up of good sentences." The interested layman would see such goals as modest indeed. Many a seasoned professional, however, shrinks from even so modest a formulation, seeing a trap and pitfall in every word. What, exactly, is a paragraph? How long is it? Is there any way to recognize it other than by the typographical convention of indentation? Does it contain a describable structure of any kind? Assuming these problems to be solved, what is the meaning "good" when associated with the word "paragraph"? What is a good paragraph as opposed to a poor paragraph? Assuming these problems to be solved, what is a good sentence? Big problems have small problems on their backs to bite 'em, and so ad infinitum.

Whatever the agreed goals may be, the problem of explicitly defining the terms used in expression of the goals must be solved. Goals that relate to composition products must be defined in terms that relate to composition products. Four methods of explicitly defining or describing product goals come to mind:

1. an arbitrary description derived from discussion of the problem by the goal setters;
2. an analysis of the works of established writers which may be taken to be models;
3. an analysis of the composition work of the students at the appropriate level;
4. a combination of any or all of these.

If the goal setters emphasize the third of the suggested techniques, that of analyzing pupil compositions, in devising their descriptions, they secure for themselves an important advantage: realism. Descriptions resting too heavily on the use of other techniques may result in formulations far beyond the power of young writers to approach.

There follows a description of a method in developing a formulation of the kind under discussion here.[1] First, a number of teachers at a given grade level collect sets of papers written by students of varying abilities. The teachers exchange sets; this is done to help keep identity of writers from biasing the judgements of the readers. Papers are read and scored as superior, adequate, inadequate. Then the characteristics of the papers marked superior and inadequate are noted and compared. Papers marked adequate are not considered, since the presumed contrast between the superior and inadequate papers will be more striking, and thus, more revealing.

The primary targets in the analysis are the more objective elements in the composition products. First of all, such things as the frequency and types of errors in mechanics and spelling are noted. Next, such gross features as paragraph length in terms of numbers of sentences and sentence length in terms of number of words are noted. The next factor might be the occurrence of sentence types, both with respect to structure, (that is, simple, complex, compound) and with respect to semantic type (statement, question, command, etc.).

1 The processes described here were developed in a suburban school system in eastern Massachusetts under a grant from SUPRAD, a foundation encouraging curriculum development and research. The teaching practices described have been used in the author's classes in a different school system.

The paragraphs on the papers can now be read to determine if they reveal a real structure. Where does the shortest sentence occur? Where does the longest sentence occur? Which paragraphs contain topic sentences? Where does the topic sentence occur?

Finally, the papers can be read in an effort to expose critical stylistic devices. Which authors have elected to use the omniscient voice, which the first person, and which the second person? Are shifts in viewpoint apparent? What kinds of inappropriate usages occur and where in the compositions do they occur? Why are they inappropriate?

At this point the faculty readers, by comparing their notation on superior papers and inadequate papers, will be able to state, rather precisely, just what the differences are to which they have responded in their original scoring of the papers. They will not need to refer to such ambiguous terms as originality, coherence, or pleasing expression. In addition to knowing what the real differences are, they will know which differences really make a difference. At this point, the faculty will be able to formulate concrete goals in the composition program for students of low academic ability.

The next giant step is the development of the sequence of baby steps that will move the students from their present stage of composition skill to these goals.

The first phase in the program must be an assessment and description of the characteristics that the compositions display--the compositions of the students in question before any training. Many teachers have found a simple check list a valuable aid in systematizing their analyses. Information can be gathered both from composition assignments and from informal inventories of spelling skill, punctuation skill, etc. Items on the check list are best derived from the specific criteria recorded as program goals.

The next phase of the program is knowing what kind of activities to avoid in attempting to move pupils towards the goals. Reference to research can be helpful here. There are in the literature great numbers of studies, indeed, numbers of collections and reviews of studies, indicating procedures that have born little fruit.[2] The consensus seems to be that the lessons and activities that make up the bulk of the conventional curricula in grammar and usage are of little value in effecting the desired pupil behavior on composition assignments. Quantities of classroom time spent in drill in such areas as internal punctuation, for example, fail to be reflected in usage in student writing. The sad fact is that most English teachers do not need to refer to the literature for this information: they know it from their own unhappy experiences. Many weaker students, it seems, are left more confused than formerly as a result of their exposure to lessons in grammar and usage.

Since the degree of transfer of training from discrete lessons in many areas of grammar and usage is rather doubtful, what approach can a teacher take in moving the students toward the goals of the curriculum? The teacher is aware of the nature of the goals in no uncertain terms, having generalized them from her experience in reading a number of compositions. This seems to be a rather high level, complicated intellectual

2 For example, approximately every two years the Encyclopedia of Educational Research publishes such a survey. In addition, there such surveys as that in Hunnicutt and Iverson's Research in the Three R's.

exercise. She has dealt with abstractions and evaluations. She has not read composition book maxims nor written composition book exercises in order to formulate her goals. She has, rather, looked quite closely at examples of student composition which she has felt to be superior in quality. Sound pedagogy suggests that students might emulate this process to some degree and in a controlled situation.

From the survey of student writing undertaken in order to formulate concrete goals the teacher has generalized the characteristics of a good composition. From these generalizations it should be possible to develop a model composition. For example, if paragraphs in good compositions have shown a tendency to exhibit a certain structure, the model that is made can be similarly structured. If the first sentence in good paragraphs is the shortest sentence, the first sentence in the model should be the shortest. If the shortest sentence is usually the topic sentence, the model can demonstrate this characteristic. If good compositions have been found to contain compound sentences, the model can contain compound sentences; if it has been found that good writers avoid compound sentences, the model will contain none. Thus a concrete realization of the generalizations of program goals can be developed. This realization can be expressed in the form of a model composition.

Now the teaching of composition has been simplified. Using the model as a basis for composition lessons, the teacher has her pupils work towards imitating it.

The easiest kind of imitation is the kind wherein the general structure of the paragraph and its sentences is left intact. All the words that carry a clear semantic meaning become blanks. The student uses his own words in the blanks. The words that the linguists call function words (prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs like when, where, if, relative pronouns, etc.) are retained as they occur in the model. For example, the topic sentence: "The Morgan horse is the most useful animal in working a ranch." becomes: "The _____ is the most _____ _____ in _____." Each student, then, may use this model in formulating original topic sentences: "The atomic sub is the most feared ship in the United States Navy."; or "The French twist is the most popular style in hair-dos." In like manner the whole composition can be developed.

In the first phase of work using a paragraph model, the teacher, in teacher-led lessons, works slowly and carefully with her pupils in an analysis of her model. As each part of the paragraph is analyzed, the student develops an original sentence in imitation of that part. Finally, he has a complete paragraph. In subsequent lessons, the guidance of the teacher is gradually withdrawn as she notes the ease with which her pupils handle their paragraphs.

As the single paragraph composition is mastered, it will be possible to move into compositions containing more than one paragraph. Appropriate models are provided. Models for specialized kinds of compositions such as book reports can be developed and used.

In his work with students, the author has noted that as students develop proficiency in use of a model, they tend to depart from a rigid adherence to its lines. An unexpected consequence of this kind of composition instruction, and an immensely pleasing one, has been a reduction in frequency of occurrence of a number of characteristics ordinarily not thought to be associated with the composing aspects of composition writing. That is, the quality of the handwriting in terms of legibility improves, the number of mechanical errors decreases, and the number of misspellings decreases!

Perhaps these phenomena reflect a decrease in general frustration at writing compositions.

During the school year 1962-1963 the author was one of a group of teachers who developed a model paragraph in such a program. The model is as follows:

> "The Siamese is the most interesting cat as a pet. When a cat-owner brags about his blue-eyed friend, he usually has a Siamese in mind. Because of its unusual coloring, its fondness for killing rodents, and its love of a good swim, it is always the subject of some interesting doings. Its love of swimming is probably its most interesting feature, since cats usually dislike water. Its many unusual characteristics make its owner the object of envy of other cat-keepers, and this is despite the fact that the bathroom is out of bounds when someone is taking a bath."

Using this model as a starting point, success in improving the composition product was experienced by both teacher and pupils. A first single paragraph composition (before special instruction) was submitted by an eighth grade student:

English

> "I did my composition on Joan Smith. Joan lives at 103 Norcross st. Shes 13 and one of 4 children 2 brothers and two sisters' Her only Ambition now is to be a housewife. She likes all foods. Her favirote sport is softball."

The first composition (uncorrected) after experience with the model read as follows:

Horses

> "Studying horses is the most fasinating subject as a hobby. When a horse owner talkes about his chestnut brown hunter, he usully has a good horse in mind. Because of its ability to jump great heights, its prancing grace, and its love of a good run It is always indulged in some interesting doings. Its love of jumping is probably is greatest feature, Since most animals as big as the horse can't jump at all. Its wounderful characteristics make a horse-owner the envy of many animal owners and this is overlooking the fact that the horse can not be penned in by a small fence, because he will be up and over in no time."

After two more such essays, the student had obtained a mastery of the form. The next stage was the development of two parallel paragraphs:

> "My father was brought up the hard way. He was born in the Old Country. He was eleven when his father died, from then on it meant work for him and his older brother. They both had come to America and worked on farms. There was never too much time for enjoying the things most boys had."

> "My father's brother-in-law was brought up the easy way. He never had to work. He would just come home from school, do his home-work and go out with the boys. He had, as you might call it, a very easy life as a boy."

Notice that the writer has departed from the precise lines of the model. Notice too the decrease in mechanical and spelling errors. The final composition in the series embodies two parallel modeled paragraphs in an original frame consisting of an introductory paragraph, a transitional paragraph and a conclusion.

Comparison of the Greyhound and the Poodle

"In these two paragraphs I will compare the racing greyhound and the poodle, a house pet.

"The greyhound is a racing dog. It is the fastest of all dogs. When the owner of a racing dog talks about his powerful, long-legged friend, he has a greyhound in mind. The dog is short-haired and may be tan, brindle, white, bluish, or spotted. There are different types throughout the world. The dogs weigh from sixty to seventy pounds, but are usually very fast, although they are difficult to care for and expensive to own.

"I have told you the facts about keeping greyhounds; now I will tell you about the poodle.

"The poodle is a different type of dog. It is usually a pet, and most poodles are smart animals. Poodles can be white, black, grey, blue or brown. Their hair is curley or frizzy and usually clipped or cropped in spcial ways. The poodle originated in Germany in the 1500's and is expensive to raise and own.

"It is easy to see that although a greyhound and poodle are quite different in many ways, they have one characteristic in common: they are both expensive and demand a lot of care and time from the owner."

All these writing samples are reproduced in the form in which they came to the teacher's desk, before revision.

Whatever the shortcomings, the procedure described here seems to result in a greater number of better composition products than the more conventional procedure of (1) the assignment of a topic; (2) the more or less undirected writing activity of the pupils; (3) the endless and somewhat directionless red-marking of errors after the compositions have been produced. To this teacher, the use of the kind of program outlined above has been one way of seeing that some of his promises are ke; t.